

TIMOTHY





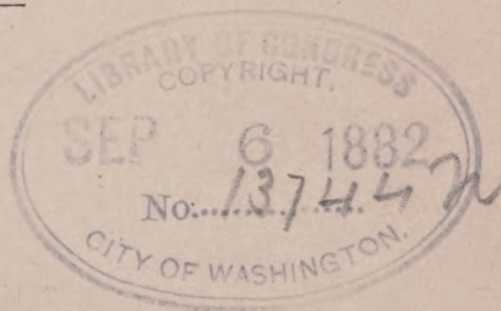


# TIMOTHY:

HIS NEIGHBORS AND HIS FRIENDS.

BY

MRS. MARY E. IRELAND.



PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.  
1882.



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TO  
HER OWN DEAR HOME CIRCLE,  
AND TO  
ALL OTHER HOME CIRCLES IN THE LAND,  
THIS  
STORY OF DOMESTIC LIFE

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

BALTIMORE, 1882.







## P R E F A C E.

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WHEN the subject of a preface was under consideration, but one thought seemed in any way necessary, and that was, dear reader, whoever you may be, in making the acquaintance of Timothy, you may perhaps recognize among his neighbors and friends some old acquaintances, who, though figuring in different scenes, have intentionally preserved identity.

If so, and those acquaintances were ever worthy of regard, it is hoped that they are now doubly so ; for although at a casual glance some of them may appear superfluous, yet, should you bear them company to the end, even the narrator will not be more willing to acknowledge that each and every one aided in the development of Timothy ; and, unless worthy, might have been his neighbors, but could never have been his friends.



It seems impossible that what has given so much pleasure to relate will not give some pleasure to hear, notwithstanding the advantage possessed by the narrator, that each and every character has its original in her remembrance.



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# TIMOTHY:

## HIS NEIGHBORS AND HIS FRIENDS.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### TIMOTHY.

HE was small, thin, freckled, had yellowish-red hair, was a newsboy, and was named Timothy.

From six o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, could be heard his cheery, piping voice, "Here's your *Morning Telegram, Chronicle, Visitor, and Comet! Morning Telegram*, only two cents!" Popping into business-places, shouting around corners, jumping out of street-cars, crossing crowded streets, dodging wheels of vehicles, weaving among pedestrians, he kept blithely on his way.

About four o'clock his "cry" varied, and "*Evening Telegram!*" was shouted with as much energy and vigor, although the voice might be a trifle less clear than that which proclaimed its predecessor.

One blustery morning in November, Granny Edmonds, with whom Timothy made his home, awoke him from the sleep which abundant exercise rendered sweet and refreshing, and reminded him that it was



time to arise. This duty done, granny crept back into bed, leaving Timothy in full possession of the kitchen, where he slept, to make his toilet and heat the small pot of coffee which she had prepared overnight.

It was but the work of a moment to put some of the light wood which granny had collected the day before into the spindle-legged stove, which was soon in full blast, and resembled an ambitious little locomotive, through the open mouth of which glowed sufficient light to enable Timothy to dress.

His simple breakfast was soon despatched, and donning a garment which had once been a gentleman's dress-coat, but served its present owner as an overcoat, he set cheerily out.

Descending the rickety steps of the old tenement, of which he and granny occupied the sky parlor,—or, in other words, if the house had turned upside down, granny and Timothy would have been on the first floor,—he ran briskly to the offices, received his supply of papers, and just as “Big Sam”—as the Baltimore newsboys called the city hall clock—clanged the hour of six, he gave his first shout, “Here’s your *Morning Telegram, Chronicle, Visitor, and Comet!* Has the full election returns, robbery of the Petroleum Bank, great fire at Canton, and wedding in high life! *Morning Telegram!* Only two cents!”

Somehow he had been unusually successful that morning: two gentlemen, who had each given a nickel, refused the change which Timothy promptly offered, and all excepting one of his papers were disposed of; so his spirits were at high-water mark indeed.



He sometimes forgot to "cry," but whistled instead; when, suddenly remembering that whistling was not business, he made up for lost time.

He had just turned out of a thoroughfare and entered a street lined with handsome residences, when the sounds of barking, yelping, snarling, and shouting proclaimed a dog-fight. Timothy was on the spot in a twinkling. Two dogs—a black and one of reddish-yellow, with a brass collar, around which was tied a knot of blue ribbon—were amusing a group of boys, said boys aiding and abetting them to prolong the entertainment.

Timothy edged his way among them, and his indignation knew no bounds when he perceived the black dog was much the larger; and although the yellow dog was equally pugnacious, and determined not to be vanquished, it was evidently losing ground.

"Shame on you!" cried Timothy. "Is not one of you fellows going in for the littlest dog?" And, running to the nearest pump, he filled his cap with water and dashed it over the combatants, who ran shivering and yelping separate ways, the yellow dog limping and bearing other evidences of the skirmish.

"Dear me! better make your will, sonny; you'll die early, like the good boys in Sunday-school books," remarked a big boy, tauntingly.

"Leave me that overcoat, Guinea-egg," sneered another.

"He took the yellow dog's part because it is the color of his hair. Save its hide, bub, you may need a wig some day," shouted a third.



"I did not," cried Timothy, bursting into tears; for, brave as he was when circumstances demanded, he would cry like a baby on occasions, which always excited the derision of the boys. "I did not save it because it is yellow, but because I hate to see anything that is little abused."

"Brother Smith, please pass around the hat," whined the big boy.

Timothy waited for no more, but taking his paper from his bosom, where he had thrust it in the emergency, he disappeared around the corner, and soon his "*Morning Telegram*, gentlemen!" showed that he had regained his equanimity.

He had just run down the marble steps of a dwelling whose mistress had beckoned to him from a window and purchased his remaining paper, when what should he see limping towards him but the little yellow dog.

Timothy's heart was in the right place, and was warm enough to give comfort to the shivering creature; he unbuttoned his overcoat, thanking his lucky stars that it had not been altered to fit him, as granny had always intended, but had never done, and placing the dog within, he started for home.

Although it was nearly noon, granny was still out on her daily pilgrimage hunting fuel, at which Timothy was in no wise dismayed, for he knew by experience—the best of teachers—that granny never stayed beyond her usual time without coming home full-handed; so he hunted up a crust of bread, soaked it in a little warm water, and gave it to his *protégé*, who devoured it eagerly.



"Nineteen pennies of my money to-day," thought Timothy, taking it from his pocket, "is clear gain. I would like to surprise granny with something good for dinner; let's see,—what will nineteen cents buy? Oh, I know! I will get some sassage and some rolls; all pups like sassage." The latter clause of this reflection referred to the yellow dog.

Hunting for a bit of old carpet, he found a dilapidated chair-cushion, placed it behind the stove for the dog, and, sallying out, met granny toiling up the steps.

"Oh, Tim," she said, "such luck as never was! I found a house as they was pullin' down, and the gentleman told me to fall to and help myself. I broke lots of kindlin' and sold it, brought all this home, and am going back this afternoon. And, Tim," she continued, lowering her voice, "what do you think I've got tied up in the old handkercher? why, half a pound of sugar and a pat of butter; sich extravagance!" mimicking, and casting a side-glance at a half-opened door on the landing, whereat they both chuckled.

"Well, granny, seeing that you are home, I will leave my dog in your care," said Timothy, with quite an air of proprietorship, as he relieved granny of her burden.

"Your dog, Timothy!" echoed granny, as she gained her eyrie and dropped, panting, into the nearest chair. "Why, the purty creature! how did you come by it, Tim?"

The newsboy briefly recounted his experiences of the morning, and closed with flashing eyes and clinched



fists. "I wish I had that boy here that called me Guinea-egg!" he said.

"Overcome evil with good, Timothy," said granny, soothingly; "I heerd that once when I was a gal, and it has helped me over many a rough place since."

Granny set to work to kindle the fire, and Timothy departed on his delayed errand. He soon returned with his rolls and sausage, to which were added, by way of dessert, some apples; and the dinner, with the help of granny's butter and sugar, was a success.

In the mean time granny appeared to have something upon her mind. Twice she had opened her mouth, but shut it without saying anything; had commenced remarks which had turned out different from their original intention; but Timothy was so absorbed with the unaccustomed luxury of the dinner, accompanied by a good cup of coffee with plenty of sugar in it, that he failed to notice; so granny was constrained to withhold her observation until a more propitious time.

"It strikes me, Timothy," said granny, that evening, as she sat on a pile of wood behind the stove and commenced filling her pipe preparatory to a comfortable smoke,— "it strikes me that dog has been some little gal's pet."

"As likely as not," replied the boy, nonchalantly; "and whoever owned her has taken good keer of her; look at her collar how bright it is, and her hair is as glossy as silk."

Evidently Timothy had not taken the hint. Granny must make another effort.



"If it had always been yourn, you wouldn't have wanted to lose it, would you, Timothy?"

"I would rather have lost my overcoat, and gone cold all winter," replied the boy, promptly.

"I expect the little gal is grievin' for it; we ought to let her know where it is, oughtn't we?"

Timothy's countenance fell in a moment.

"Oh, granny, the dog follered me! I did not coax it away. If it had not been for me it would not be alive now; so it is more mine than anybody else's."

Granny was slightly bewildered by this logical reasoning; she smoked and pondered.

"But it was your duty to try to save it," she resumed. "Suppose a big boy was beatin' a little one and you happened along and took the little one's part, and you knowed by his clothes that he was a rich man's son, would you think you ought to keep him and not try to find his people?"

"What makes you think it is a girl's dog, granny?" he inquired, after a pause.

"On account of the bit of ribbon; it came off the little gal's hair."

"But the dog was lost, granny; it is the same as though I found her."

"Finding her would not make her yourn. I once knowed a man as found a goold watch, and all the rest of his life he was afeard he'd find the owner. Sometimes that watch was hid up the chimbly wrapped in an old woollen stockin'; sometimes it was in a cracked teapot on the top shelf of the closet; and after he died it was put in the papers, and the owner got it. I don't



say, Tim, as how that man would have picked a gentleman's pocket, if he had a chance, but that watch business was twin-brother to it; it was, indeed."

"What do you want me to do about it, granny?" said the boy, softly.

"Try to find the owner," replied she, brightening; "and if you don't find her, the dog's yours."

"But I have no time to go around hunting an owner; besides, somebody might claim her that had no right."

"I've been thinking it over all afternoon, Tim, and this is my plan. We've got no money to put the little dog in the *Telegram*; so you just write suthin' on paper and stick it on the walls in your route, and let people know the dog is here."

"But anybody might come and ask for the dog while I am away, and you wouldn't know, and let them have her."

"I have got a piece of chalk, Tim; they will have to chalk them figgers what's on the collar onto the kitchen-door afore they see the dog; and if the figgers match, the dog's theirs."

The writing of a notice was a difficult task to Timothy; but, improvising a writing-desk out of one of granny's pieces of wood, he set to work, and after many futile attempts the notice was completed to the satisfaction of both.

"LOST.

"A yeller dog with white pause has on a bras coler number 6 hammer's alley no reward."

It did not occur to either granny or the boy that



this notice was a little obscure, and its readers might be apt to suppose that the occupants of No. 6 Hammer's Alley were mourning the loss of a yellow dog, although they did not consider it worthy of reward.

For several days after Timothy had laboriously copied and distributed his notices, he dreaded finding the dog missing when he reached home ; but a week passed, and it was still in his possession. So he and granny felt settled enough to discuss the subject of a name, but nothing either suggested satisfied the fastidious taste of Timothy.

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## CHAPTER II.

### A SURPRISE-PARTY.

“ Things are not what they seem ;  
Surprises meet us every day,  
And teach us how we dream.”

THERE had been a long spell of rainy weather. For six days the sun had not shown a glimpse of himself, and everything, out-doors and in, wore a look of clammy despondency.

Moreover, Mrs. Longman, whose husband was one of Timothy's best patrons, was indulging in one of her gloomy attacks, and was looking at all created things, herself included, through the bluest kind of spectacles.

For several days she had gone about the house with a dull aching at her heart, a cloud upon her brow, and



a querulous twang in her voice, until her husband, kind, forbearing man as he was, began to lose patience; while Bridget in the kitchen muttered, almost audibly, that "a saint from hiven would find herself clane bate out wid trying to plaze her."

Mrs. Longman was naturally not a bad-tempered woman; on the contrary, she possessed many noble and commendable qualities; but her spirits were not equable: she would have her seasons of gloom, which, had there been any apparent cause for them, might have been looked upon in the light of an affliction to be sympathized with; but, as it was, even the most lenient of her friends characterized them by the name of "dumps," which, though Webster condemns as not being an elegant word, was in their opinion plenty good enough to express the state of the case. Her family might have been rendered miserable by her despondency had they been of the material capable of being made miserable; but, as it was, each accepted the visitation in his or her individual way. Mr. Longman stayed out of the house all he could; Bridget contented herself with her prayer-book and her beads in the comfortable kitchen; while the two boys, who were too young to go to school except in good weather, amused themselves in their play-room in the attic, or in Bridget's domains, where they were always welcome.

The short November day was drawing to a close, and although the little gilt clock on the mantel had proclaimed it to be only four o'clock, it was getting too dark for Mrs. Longman to sew any longer upon the



little cloth suits she was languidly mending, so, laying them aside, she wandered aimlessly into the kitchen, where Bridget was folding the newly-ironed clothes from the rack by the glowing grate.

"Mr. Longman will not be at home until late this evening, Bridget," said she. "Business will detain him down-town, so you may just set up anything for the children. I do not feel as though I could eat anything; everything tastes alike to me, and nothing tastes right."

What the reply would have been will never be known, for at that moment there came a resounding knock on the area gate, and, throwing an old shawl over her head, Bridget hastily responded to the call.

"It is two boys, ma'am," she said, returning almost immediately, "and they have come to a party here."

"A party!" echoed Mrs. Longman, in astonishment. "Who in the world told them there was a party here?"

"I don't know, ma'am; I will go and ask them," said the willing maid, who apparently would rather have gotten wet than not.

"Bring them in out of the rain, Bridget," called Mrs. Longman from the door, "until we find out what they mean. Of course," thought she to herself, "it is a mistake; but what possessed them to come to the area gate?"

Bridget came in, followed by the boys, who had been in the mean time joined by a third, and who, notwithstanding the soaking rain, were not as wet as might have been expected, owing to their having pieces of



oil-cloth around them, which upon inspection proved to be old carriage-curtains sewed together; while the last arrival wore a gentleman's old dress-coat, which made a useful if not very ornamental overcoat for the party-seeking lad. That lad was Timothy.

They did not appear to think it expected of them to remove their dripping hats, but stood eying the good fire and Mrs. Longman with complacent smiles.

"You say you came to a party," said the lady; "have you not made a mistake?"

"Oh, no, ma'am, this is the place your boys told us," said Timothy. "We went to the front of the house and took the number as soon as we sold out our papers, and here it is," taking a scrap of the margin of a newspaper from his pocket, and showing the number, sure enough, in figures of magnificent proportions.

Mrs. Longman was bewildered. "You say, 'As soon as you sold out your papers.' What do you mean?"

"Why, you see we are newsboys, ma'am, every one of us," explained one of the curtained lads. "The 'Bulletin,' 'Chronicle,' 'Mirror,' and several others will be along as soon as they can hire somebody to 'cry' for them, as this one did," pointing to Timothy.

"And we are going to pay them with something from the party, if you please, ma'am," supplemented Timothy, with an air of cheerful confidence.

Mrs. Longman could not restrain a smile. "Do each of you only sell the paper whose name you have taken?" she inquired.

"No, ma'am," replied Timothy, "we sell all; but, you see, all the boys who are coming to-night belong



to a club, and we fixed it to call each other by the name of one of our papers, and we always call our own names first of mornings. I am 'The Morning Telegram.' ”

“Go to the attic, Bridget,” said Mrs. Longman, “and tell the children to come down. Take off your wraps, boys, and dry your feet, and we will see what can be done.”

Bridget soon returned with the delinquents.

“Boys, how did you happen to invite company without telling me, so that I could be prepared for them?” said their mother, gently but gravely.

“Why, we did tell you, mamma; don't you remember? We told you that Mr. Reisinger told our class last Sunday that we were not doing as much good in the world if we invited boys to a feast who had plenty to eat and to wear, and who could invite us in return; but he said we ought to invite the poor boys to whom such things were a treat. He said Jesus loved the lame and the halt and the blind, and if we would be like him we must do as he did. So Johnny and me told all the newsboys we met to come to a party here to-night, and to bring all the lame boys they could find. Don't you remember now, mamma?”

Poor Mrs. Longman remembered with a pang that she had been so wrapped up in her own gloomy and selfish thoughts the past week that she had paid but little attention to her boys in any way, and she reflected, “Shall I let the good seed, sown by a stranger in the hearts of my children, perish for want of care from their mother? Will I let my own selfish love of



ease rob these poor boys of a pleasure which might always be a pleasant remembrance to them? No, I will rouse myself, and make the best of it."

Bridget had in the mean time been summoned again to the area gate, and had rescued two more guests; one, a pale little cripple on crutches, carefully sheltered from the rain by the "Evening News," who had not only succeeded in obtaining a substitute, but had borrowed an umbrella, which umbrella had seen its best days, to be sure, being minus two stays and patched with a different color; but, demoralized as it was, it did not prevent the guests it sheltered from being joyfully welcomed by their compatriots already under cover.

The crippled boy in particular was warmly received by Mrs. Longman, whose heart was stirred with sympathy for suffering in any form. She had just been upon the point of proposing that the boys should, until supper was ready, adjourn to the attic, which, like the rest of the house, was warm and comfortable; but, out of consideration for the lame boy, she changed her plans, and sent two of the guests with her sons to bring down such playthings as they desired into the parlor,—in which, with her usual good sense, she had nothing too fine for use.

The boys were scarcely settled in the parlor when a ring of the bell took them all scampering to the front door, where stood three boys; one of whom, the "Evening Bulletin," was spokesman.

"I hope you will excuse me, ma'am, for not coming to the area gate this wet evening," said he, bowing over the heads of the boys to Mrs. Longman, who was



coming to see what this method of announcement might portend, "but Buddy here," pointing to one of his followers, "is blind, and I thought you would not mind us coming to the front door; and I could not find a lame boy," continued he, turning apologetically to the Longman boys, "so I brought the charcoal man's boy, who is deaf and dumb."

Mrs. Longman conducted them to the kitchen to remove their wet wrappings and to dry their shoes, and from thence to the parlor, where the other guests were sitting rather silently gazing at the pictures on the wall and other objects of interest, while she went back to the kitchen to hold council with Bridget in regard to that all-important event—supper.

"What in the world will we get, Bridget?" said she, flurriedly. "There are eight in there now, beside our own, which makes ten, and there may be as many more for all anybody knows, and it is too wet to go out for anything."

"The asiest thing in the world, ma'am; I have been considering that same while you were in the parlor. There's the chickens in the yard that we were fattening for Thanksgiving; nothing in the world would be suitabler than them."

"But that would be only one kind of meat, Bridget, and perhaps some of them do not eat chicken; and now that they are here, I would like them all to be satisfied."

"Trust me for that, ma'am; I never saw a boy yet that could not eat his weight in chicken, only give him the time. I will go immediately and tell the fowls



their priseness is wanted at a party, and the kettle is singing as though it expected a broth of a time."

"And I will make a lot of biscuits," said Mrs. Longman; "and while you are cooking the chickens I will set the table."

"And if you please, ma'am, while the flour and other things are around, I will make some gingercakes; for next to a chicken stew, with oceans of gravy, there's nothing a boy likes better than warm gingercakes."

"Oh, Bridget, you are so thoughtful!" said Mrs. Longman, and somehow her heart began to grow lighter; and with a cripple, a blind boy, and a mute in the next room, she began to realize that she had much for which to be thankful.

Several additions were made to the company in the parlor, and by the time the supper was smoking upon the table the mirth was growing "fast and furious."

The boys were almost dazzled by the brilliancy of the dining-room, the glitter of glass and china and silver under the bright gaslight. Mrs. Longman had exerted herself to make it a feast indeed to those who so seldom fared except upon the coarsest viands, and her table showed no lack of dainty preserved fruits, jellies, and all the little extras which she could muster on short notice. She judged that boys leading the active out-door life of the majority of the guests were not troubled with "nerves," so coffee the richest and tea the purest graced the board, while the perfume of the baking gingerbread floated through the open kitchen-door, where Bridget, in the kindness of her heart, was importing a choice stock of horses, cows, and other



animals for each and all, cut from the luscious gingerbread.

Mrs. Longman took quiet observation of the company while helping them, and she observed one puzzle for which in her own mind she could find no solution, and that was that the blind boy, while evidently enjoying his gravy, had carefully laid his pieces of chicken aside.

"Here is an exception to Bridget's rule," she thought to herself. "Do you not like chicken, my boy?" she inquired.

"Yes, ma'am ; I love it," he replied, with emphasis ; "but——" He hesitated, while his pale little face grew flushed.

A moment afterwards he slipped quietly from his chair, and with the unerring accuracy with which blind persons calculate distances, he came to Mrs. Longman and said, "Please, ma'am, may I touch your face?"

"Certainly, dear," was the reply.

Very gently and speedily the soft hand of the blind boy examined each feature, and then, apparently satisfied, he whispered, "I would like to take it to Nancy ; she is so good to me ; she is sick, and cannot get good things to eat."

Quick tears of sympathy filled Mrs. Longman's eyes. Truly she was receiving many lessons this evening. She was giving, but it was being returned to her an hundred-fold.

She kissed the blind boy, and whispered in return, "You are a noble little boy to remember others ; eat all you wish ; I will see that your friend has some also."



After supper was over, the table cleared away, and the other boys deep in the enjoyment of merry games in which he could take no part, Mrs. Longman and the blind boy had a long and confidential conversation. She gathered from his earnest lips that the poor in purse can be rich in spirit; that the milk of human kindness sometimes made fertile, hearts, which had never known anything but stern, unrelenting poverty.

The woman he called Nancy had received him from the bedside of his dying mother, and, although she had to work early and late to support her own helpless ones, she was, to the best of her poor ability, faithfully fulfilling her promise.

The Longmans were not rich, but Mrs. Longman sadly compared her own selfish life, with its means of doing good, with that of the poor woman whose opportunities were so limited, and yet, whose life was a continued sacrifice for others.

Mrs. Longman was a Sabbath-school teacher, and her conscience had reproved her many times that she had not gone into the by-ways to bring children under the influence of the gospel. Here was her opportunity, and she resolved to seize it. She argued with herself as to the propriety of using a temporal inducement for a spiritual end, and her conscience, upon reflection, approved.

In the mean time Mr. Longman came home, and the cheerful smile upon his wife's lips, so different from what he was expecting, delighted him; and he gave the boys an even more cordial greeting than was his wont.



When Mrs. Longman informed him how it all came about he resolved to do his part toward giving them a good time, so sent an abundant order for apples and the beloved peanuts, the idol of the newsboy's heart, and told them to help themselves, which they did to a man.

Mrs. Longman, with Bridget's assistance, spent the remainder of the evening making up packages for the boys to take home with them, and the substitutes were not forgotten.

With her husband's approval she made a proposition to the boys before they took leave, and that was that they should come one evening in every month and take supper with her boys, providing all who could would go to some Sunday-school. To her glad surprise the most of them agreed to the arrangement, foremost of whom was Timothy, who had enjoyed the party keenly; and those who held back she found, upon inquiry, were constrained to object on the score of proper clothing, a want which she engaged to supply.

She went further than that. She exerted herself to obtain admission into a blind asylum for the blind boy, and a short time after the party she had the pleasure of seeing him comfortably fixed in his new abode.

She took the name and address of every boy, and promised to pay each a visit in his home. After each of the monthly parties she visited the blind boy, taking with her his share of the good things, always accompanied by her sons, and sometimes by the "Chronicle," "Comet," or one of the weeklies, but never the "Telegram," for reasons which will be explained; and one of the most useful lessons which Mrs. Longman ever



received was this: "There is no surer remedy for depressed spirits than doing good to others;" and this lesson came from her surprise-party.

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## CHAPTER III.

### TIMOTHY'S CONFESSION.

"For life is not all smooth, my lad,  
And the way is sometimes weary;  
But your brave, brave heart will bear its part,  
And press on, bright and cheery."

TIMOTHY had never before been privileged to experience how much company a dumb creature could be for one; although, truth to say, in one sense of the word his dog was very far from being a dumb animal. Her voice was very frequently heard during the day, particularly at such times as Timothy was on hand to encourage her. The moment the boy's step was heard on the creaky steps she flew to the door to meet him, all aglow with joy, and before he was a moment seated she was all over him, running her sharp little nose into his pockets in search of peanuts, which he had taught her to eat like a newsboy. Timothy, always cheerful, was never so happy in his life before. A loving father with a large family of young children on his hands could scarcely have felt more solicitude than did Timothy for the maintenance of his dog.



As he passed the market on his homeward way, a penny bought choice scraps from a kind-hearted butcher, who had dogs of his own, and had a fellow-feeling for Timothy. Sometimes the supply was so liberal that granny made soup for the whole party; so that one might say the yellow dog contributed her share to the support of the household.

As granny always retired first, it was Timothy's habit to coax the dog to sleep on the foot of his bed; and after a few evenings she needed no coaxing, but the moment granny was ensconced under the old coverlet, the intelligent little creature with a skip and a jump alighted in the exact spot she had occupied the night before.

One night Timothy had fearful dreams. He felt as though a strong hand had clutched his throat; he heard sounds as though huge animals were crashing through bushes, and at length was awakened by a stinging pain in his arm. The dog had bitten him.

He arose in bed and looked at her. She tugged at the bedclothes, and then ran yelping to the door. The suffocating smoke, the light, and noise warned Timothy that the tenement was on fire.

He sprang to his feet, grasped his overcoat, and rushed to awaken granny. Dipping one of her stockings in water, he tied it over her nose and mouth, and, wrapping the coverlet around her, bade her run for life. Using the same precaution for himself, he and his dog flew over the building to arouse the inmates.

He pounded and shouted, and the dog barked, and between them every soul was saved. Some one on



the street turned on an alarm; the engines arrived in time to prevent a serious conflagration, but not to save the worthless shell, which had burned like a pile of shavings.

In the excitement Timothy lost sight of granny. When all had gathered, shivering and homeless, on the pavement, she was not among them, yet several had seen her leave the building.

Timothy and his dog hurried to search for her, when a fireman hallooed. He had found a woman, a square off, moaning with pain. It was granny. In her haste and bewilderment she had fallen and broken a limb.

Tears rained from Timothy's eyes as he knelt beside her and clasped her wrinkled hand in his.

"The hospital is the place for her, my boy," said the kind-hearted fireman; "I will notify them to send an ambulance."

When the newsboy set out next morning on his rounds, he felt that he had grown old in experience. The hospital authorities had kindly allowed him to remain with granny until he could find another home. He had left her as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, her limb set, and the dog beside her bed; his thoughts, after his escape of the night, ran upon a name for his deliverer. He was just passing a cigar-store when he met a gentleman, who stopped to buy a *Telegram*.

"Do you know any lady, sir, who is great on saving folks' lives?" inquired Timothy.

The gentleman considered. "A lady last evening saved a child from being run over by an ice-wagon," he replied.



"Oh," said the newsboy, with just a shade of scorn in his face, "I don't mean them people who pick and choose, but somebody who has not been stingy about it, but just went in tooth and nail, and saved a lot."

"There was an English lady named Grace Darling who saved many lives; perhaps you allude to her."

"I was not alluden to anybody in particular, sir; but that is exactly the name for her. Grace Darling! Thank you, sir! that suits exactly." And the next moment the gentleman heard, "*Morning Telegram*, gentlemen! Only two cents!" from the opposite side of the street.

After Timothy returned to the hospital that evening he received a call. The fireman who had found granny had not forgotten Timothy's tears, and had come to offer him a home with a widow lady who lived near the village of Dorton, the native place of the fireman. This lady's name was Carleton, and she had asked the fireman the last time he was at Dorton to send her a boy to assist about the farm.

Timothy was willing to go; and, after a journey of a few miles in an opportune farm-wagon, he found himself and Grace Darling in the excellent home of Mrs. Carleton; so excellent that, if granny had been there, there would have been nothing more to desire.

The dwelling of Mrs. Carleton was situated upon gently rising ground, in the midst of a fine rolling country, and was one of many comfortable homes in the neighborhood built upon just such green knolls;—homes of her friends and neighbors, who from the day of Timothy's arrival became his neighbors, and in time, his friends.



A flowery fragrant meadow lay between the home of Mrs. Carleton and that of Mr. Bryor, her nearest neighbor; in the valley lay the mill property of Archibald Levering, while the farm-house of his brother, Jonas Levering, was dimly seen through the trees and shrubbery which surrounded it, and in the distance was the elegant mansion, with its gabled roofs and Gothic windows, known in the neighborhood as "Ogilvie's Pride."

Mrs. Carleton employed an experienced farmer named Grayson, who, with his little family, lived in a neat tenant-house, only separated from the mansion and its grounds by a large and fruitful apple-orchard; yet she, being an energetic business woman, kept every part of the large and well-cultivated farm under her own supervision.

Farmer Grayson boarded all the laborers, so Mrs. Carleton's family was small, consisting only of her aged father-in-law (good old Grandfather Carleton) and her two sons, students at the academy at Dorton, a village about half a mile across-lots.

Timothy's duties, which were light (merely to do the little odd jobs which turned up in the course of the day and to go to Dorton upon errands), left plenty of time wherein to improve his manners and cultivate his mind, which Mrs. Carleton, in the goodness of her heart, resolved should be done.

She had a cousin who was fond of children, and who, for a few hours each morning, taught a class of little ones too young to go to the new school-house on the hill. Mrs. Carleton bespoke a place in this class for



Timothy, somewhat against the boy's inclination at first, for he was sensitive in regard to his want of schoolcraft; but Cousin Melie was so patient and kind, that he became reconciled to the restraint so different from his newsboy life, and did not feel his deficiencies as he would have done at the larger school.

Cousin Melie was a rosy, matronly little woman, who laughingly acknowledged herself "an old maid;" something which her friends could not gainsay, although the line of demarcation is so undefined, some persons setting *this* year as a limit and some *that*, that it is difficult to decide where girl leaves off and spinster begins. Moreover, all united in thinking that she was the very nicest one that ever lived, and her placid, contented existence bore testimony that spinsterhood was not such a lamentable state and condition as some married folks try to make out.

She lived by herself in a long, one-storied house, with three compartments, which had evidently been built at different periods. Travellers were charmed with its resemblance to the cottage wherein had lived and died that wonderful poet, Robert Burns, and somehow, almost without intending it, her home was known to herself and others as the "Burns Cottage."

It was in better repair, however, than its namesake, had green shutters, porches overrun with honeysuckles and ivy, and garden and yard full of old-fashioned flowers. This home had been her father's and her grandfather's; and Cousin Melie loved it not only for its comfort, but for the associations connected with it, and everything which surrounded it.



Timothy had attended her school but two weeks when Cousin Melie was burned out. This, to many, may appear an abrupt and somewhat obscure sentence, but to Cousin Melie herself it was plenty long enough, perfectly lucid, and full of meaning.

To the wealthy, the loss of a poor little cottage of three rooms like hers might have cost no more regret than if it had been a hen-coop which had come to grief; to those who were insured to its full value it might have been a riddance of an incumbrance; but to poor Cousin Melie it was a real catastrophe, which required all the Christian philosophy she possessed to enable her to look upon it in the light of "all for the best," which had heretofore been her balm in every affliction.

How could it be expected of her, when one considered that the small bonfire which had flashed up and run its course in half an hour had robbed her of home and occupation, and furniture and clothing, if we may except the few garments in which she had lain down to peaceful slumber, and in which she had only escaped with her life? Then, every hour in the day, and night, too, for that matter, she thought of something of which the devouring element had robbed her,—articles which no money could replace,—the portraits of her parents, her piano, little keepsakes and souvenirs, gifts perhaps of departed friends, of little value to any one but herself, the loss of which she deeply mourned.

But there was one good turn the fire did her, which in a manner compensated for the evil. It tried her friends and proved them to be good gold,—yea, "*Guinea*



gold," as the old-time folk used to say, which was in their estimation the quintessence of all that was pure and sterling.

This home and that was opened to the terrified, sad-hearted woman; sympathy cheered her, loving words comforted her; and her patrons set about ways and means to keep her among them. The little brick school-house, deserted now because of the superior advantages of the new one, was owned by a corporation who set but little value upon it, and, standing idle, it was fast going to ruin. By the advice of her good friends, Cousin Melie applied for the purchase of it, and, a nominal price being set upon it, she became its owner. They would gladly have presented it to her, but knowing that she appreciated the "glorious privilege of being independent," they let her have her own time to make easy payments, which, by the help of her little school, was not a difficult task.

Rooms were partitioned off, a neat portico went up like magic, a picket-fence, with fancy gate, enclosed a green yard, and in a little while the whole village was proud of Cousin Melie's home. Then came the housewarming, the day of days when she took possession; and the pupils and their mothers took as much interest in the proceedings as Cousin Melie herself; but, first and foremost, we must mention that it was really astonishing how many mistakes people made about that time in buying household goods.

Mrs. Carleton had bought a carpet at an auction for a mere song, bright and new-looking, but it did not seem inclined to fit a room in her house; but, by a



singular coincidence, it just fitted Cousin Melie's parlor; so there it was, smiling bright approval upon its purchaser's tact and kindness. Another lady had a cook-stove, excellent, but too small for her family, and she had no earthly place to put it; it was such an efficient, trusty little affair that she could not bear to have it rust out unused, so she asked as a favor that Cousin Melie should give it house-room; so, shining in brilliant blackness, it was doing duty, sending out clouds of steam from its bright little tea-kettle, while its insides were literally groaning, being stuffed to repletion with good things. And so with chairs and tables and curtains, and dishes, and knickknacks of all kinds, they seemed to be in the way everywhere else; came to the moving and forgot to go home.

Oh, dear, what good times everybody had that day! They stayed to dinner and supper, were in the best kind of spirits, and all had such glorious appetites.

But, no; there was one exception, and that exception was Timothy. His spirits were decidedly at low ebb, and his appetite ditto. Moreover, his eyes had a trick of filling with tears now and then, and when all had bidden Cousin Melie good-night at the ending of this happy and ever-to-be-remembered day, he slipped out unnoticed, only to return, as soon as the last guest had departed, to kiss her hand, and, with hot tears chasing each other down his cheeks, to ask her in a voice scarcely audible, to forgive him; all of which left Cousin Melie in such a maze that she did not come out of it in time to ask for what she was to forgive him, until he was half-way home, flying across the fields like a young deer.



Cousin Melie was very busy all the next day after her house-warming, putting things to rights and adjusting her property to the best possible advantage, taking two weeks' vacation for the purpose; but all through the day, and for several days, the thought of Timothy and his singular manner—like Monsieur Tonson—would come again, and she resolved the next opportunity to ask him the question she had been too surprised to ask him the evening of her moving. But, somehow, she never could get the opportunity. When he went across-fields to the village store and post-office, taking Cousin Melie's premises in his route, it was always late in the evening, and Cousin Melie, who kept early hours, had shut herself in for the night; and if she called at Mrs. Carleton's, Timothy was out about the place at work, and she did not care to excite inquiry by asking for him; so time passed, and the occurrence was almost forgotten by Cousin Melie, when, one snowy morning, Mrs. Carleton's comfortable, roomy sleigh came to her door, her glossy, well-fed horses driven by Farmer Grayson, and Cousin Melie was asked as a favor to go and see Timothy, who was sick, and earnestly desired to see her. As the snow was so deep she could have no scholars, Mrs. Carleton had sent word for her to bring her sewing and spend the day, and she would send her home in the sleigh in the evening.

She was soon ready, pleased as a child with the prospect of a pleasant visit and a sleigh-ride; for although it was but a short walk across to Mrs. Carleton's, it was quite a little journey "round the road," especially when one took the two lanes in consideration.



"I cannot see that a hate ails him," remarked good Farmer Grayson, in the vernacular of the neighborhood, as he helped her out of the sleigh and opened the gate for her; "but he is uneasy in his mind, that's certain, and thinks you can help him, so I will keep on home, and give you a chance; and Mrs. Carleton can blow the horn when she wants me to come to take you home."

Cousin Melie thanked him, and tripped lightly up the shovelled path, with its bank of snow on either side. All she knew of Timothy was no more than everybody in the neighborhood knew, and that was, that he had been a newsboy in the city, had, like herself, narrowly escaped death by fire, and had come from the hospital to the excellent home of her cousin Carleton.

Cousin Melie found Timothy turning restlessly on his pillow, his troubled eyes eagerly scanning her countenance as she came toward him.

She took his hot, tremulous hand in hers with a firm, tender pressure, and said, kindly, "Now, Timothy, tell me exactly what it is that troubles you."

"You will not put me in jail, nor tell anybody if I tell you, will you?" replied the boy, looking cautiously around.

"You will not go to prison, of that I am certain," said Cousin Melie, encouragingly; "and for the other part, I cannot promise until I know what it is you wish me to keep secret."

"Well, then," said Timothy, bursting into tears, "I set your house on fire, and you might have been burned up in it."



Cousin Melie could not forbear giving a startled look at the boy, in which was mingled a grain of suspicion. "You did not do it intentionally, surely," she said.

"I don't know whether I did or not. Sometimes I think I did, and again I think I did not. I was coming from the village with three boxes of matches, and as I was passing your house, I thought I would take the lid off one of the boxes. My finger-nail scraped the matches, and the whole box got afire. I guess I aimed for your wood-house window, but I don't know; anyhow, it went in there. I wish I had stayed and wakened you, but I thought you might put me in jail, so I ran home, and have been worried ever since, and guess I am going to die."

Cousin Melie could scarcely help smiling at the tragical ending of the poor boy's confession; but she thought it might lessen the effect of the advice she wished to give him, so refrained. She lost no time in assuring him that he had suffered all the punishment he should suffer for his thoughtlessness, that there was no danger of his dying at present, and that not a being should know that it was set on fire unless he told it himself.

"If I ever live to be a man and make some money," said the grateful boy, "you shall have the piano and everything back you lost, if I can get them for you."

"I have no doubt you would, my dear boy," said Cousin Melie, cheerfully; "but we will not worry ourselves any more about it. I should have had to leave all my little treasures some day, so they took the lead and left me."



Cousin Melie spent a refreshing day with Mrs. Carleton and her family, giving and receiving pleasure. She gave Grandfather Carleton much new food for thought, and had a merry romp with the boys when they came home to dinner. Before the horn blew for Farmer Grayson, and while Mrs. Carleton on hospitable thoughts intent was preparing something extra for tea, she had a long, comforting, motherly talk with Timothy, after which she bade him an affectionate good-night, and left him to the first really peaceful slumber he had enjoyed since his piece of amateur incendiarism; while Cousin Melie took to her humble home the pleasing consciousness that she had added another true and faithful heart to her list of friends.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### FARMER GRAYSON RECEIVES A LESSON.

“Deeds are powerful, mere words weak,  
Battling at high heaven’s door,  
Let thy love by *actions* speak.”

It was the day before the annual butchering at Farmer Grayson’s, and his wife and Marcia—his maiden sister, who made her home with them—had been busy since the early dawn preparing for the next day’s extra work.



Several of the neighboring men were to assist, as was the custom in regard to each other. Farmer Grayson raised not only enough porkers for the use of his own family and that of Mrs. Carleton, but also had the privilege of raising several for sale. The profit accruing from them, the poultry, and other things he could take to market, was quite an addition to the salary given him by Mrs. Carleton; and he was looked upon as a prosperous man, many envying him his excellent situation as cultivator of one of the best farms in the neighborhood.

He and his son Harry, a boy of eleven years of age, had been as busy out of doors as the "women folks" had been within. Huge logs had been hauled from the woods and rolled together; smaller wood was added, chips and shavings filled the crevices; all it required was the shovel of coals which would be applied by daylight the next morning to make a splendid fire, which would light up every nook and cranny around. The hogshead of water, with its carpet covering, stood near by, all ready for the morrow.

Timothy, whose health and spirits were completely restored, had hurried home from school and made short work of dinner in his haste to assist at Farmer Grayson's in this, to him, novel experience; and when the horn blew for him to come to supper, feed the poultry, and perform several other little duties which constituted his evening work, he could scarcely tear himself away.

A tired boy was Harry Grayson when evening closed in; tired, and not a little excited. A variety of con-



flicting emotions, sorrow and pleasure, expectation and a measure of anxiety, were some of the feelings which agitated his mind. Among the swine there was one which he had for a year reckoned upon as his own. He called it "Curly" on account of its bristles, which, with all his currying, never would lie straight, but curled all over. All through the year he had attended to it and the others faithfully; the only difference he made in regard to them was, that "Curly" received all the petting.

His father, with the rest of the family, spoke of it as Harry's pig, and now that the time had drawn near for it to be disposed of, Harry began to wonder whether it would be kept for their own use or be sent to market with the others. Between his father and himself never a word had passed in regard to it, but to his aunt Marcia he had confided his conjectures and great expectations.

That the money "Curly" was worth would not be his to use as he pleased, had never crossed his mind; all his thoughts were spent upon the best way to invest it. Slate and pencil had helped him dozens of times, but even addition and subtraction could not report definitely, while the market value of Curly remained an unknown quantity.

Although his aunt Marcia had her misgivings, she did not wish to dampen Harry's anticipations by imparting them to him; but instead she resolved to settle them by having a conversation with Mr. Grayson upon the subject.

"What do you intend to do with Harry's pig,



Daniel?" she had remarked that very morning, while Harry was out of the room. "Do you intend keeping it for our own use, and paying him for it, or do you intend selling it?"

"Paying him for it! what in the world should I do that for?" he said in surprise. "He would get as much of the pork as he could eat if I kept it, would he not? But I do not intend keeping it; I will sell it."

"And give him the money?" she hesitatingly inquired.

"I think not; that would be too silly for anything, to give him so much money to squander on balls and marbles, when I have fifty ways to use it."

"But you could advise him how to spend it, and thus teach him to use money to advantage. He has asked my advice several times, and I have given it to the best of my ability, although I have been all the time fearful that you would not allow him the money."

"Well, you feared about right that time," he replied, carelessly; "it would be a downright sin to allow such a waste."

"Daniel," said his sister, earnestly, "I was present when Harry asked you for that pig; a poor little weakly thing it was; you thought it would not live, while the rest were lively and strong. When he offered to take care of it, you told him it was his to do with as he thought best. He attended to it faithfully, or it would not have lived; and now that it is as fine as any of them, although it has cost him many a pang



that it must share the fate of the rest, he has been somewhat consoled by the thought that he could buy things with the money that he has long wanted and needed."

"What can he possibly need that he does not get, I should like to know? He has plenty to eat and to wear, and that is about all that you or I or any of us get, I take it."

"Well, then, if you won't give him the money, don't say anything to him about it, either before or after you sell it, but leave the matter with me," she said, sadly, as he put on his hat to go out.

"I shall probably never think of it again; I have too many other things to bother about to think of trifles." And leaving the room he wended his way to the barn, while Marcia, standing by the window and gazing gloomily out, saw Harry, who had been currying and feeding the horses, lead them out to the water-trough.

"No wonder boys hate the farm," said she, bitterly, as tears forced their way to her eyes and rolled down her sallow cheeks. "Who can blame them for leaving it as soon as they are their own masters? What do they ever see but a dull, unending round of work? Nothing to encourage them, nothing to call their own, and worse than all this rank injustice."

Farmer Grayson was not a mean, penurious man; still less was he a dishonorable man in his dealings with others; he simply thought his children had no rights that he was called on to respect. Being his children, he was bound to clothe and otherwise provide



for them, and he did so cheerfully to the best of his ability; but that his family should have little hopes and desires that cost money, he scouted the idea.

To the older members of the small household this was not so much of a hardship. Middle-aged people are apt to look at life in a very practical light, romance having given place to reality. In the early part of Farmer Grayson's life the bread-and-butter question had been so all-absorbing that frugality had become a pleasure to him, and he strove to make it such to his family; therefore desires and needs for things looked upon as beyond their reach had so long been put patiently by, that they had almost ceased to branch out.

Marcia Grayson was in a manner dependent upon her brother, if dependence it could be called where nearly all her time and energies were spent in his interest and that of his family. He and his wife made her entirely welcome; she felt and was as much at home as any other member of the family.

Safe in a drawer of her bureau up-stairs she had a few dollars laid away, which she had earned by knitting for families in the neighborhood during her leisure hours, and although it was intended for the purchase of a warm winter shawl, she resolved that rather than Harry should be disappointed she would do as she had done scores of times,—wait.

Bright and early a morning or two after, Farmer Grayson was on his way to market. The size and weight of his porkers had been the subject of much admiring comment among his helpers, so even he was



satisfied. Mrs. Carleton's share had been securely put away in barrels, tubs, and tanks in her cellar, and he purposed doing the same with his own on his return from the city that evening.

Harry helped him off, and though he had hoped to be invited to accompany him, he was told of several little odd jobs with which to fill up the leisure between school hours and his father's return. All the day, while his hands were busy, his thoughts were at market; and when evening began to close in he climbed an old cherry-tree at the end of the lane to catch the first glimpse of the returning team.

Farmer Grayson came home in first-rate spirits, alighted from his farm-wagon in front of the barn, stretched his cramped limbs after the long and somewhat rough journey, greeted Harry pleasantly, and then went into the house; while Harry and a neighboring boy, who had come to stay all night with him, unharnessed the tired horses, and attended to them while Farmer Grayson took his supper.

"What did Harry's pig bring, Daniel?" said Marcia, as she poured him out his third cup of tea.

"Fifteen dollars in good money," replied her brother, briskly, "and I could have sold ten more like it if I had taken them."

By the time Harry and his companion came in all was talked over, and he did not get to hear anything of what from first to last had been of so much interest to him.

When he had finished his supper, Farmer Grayson and the two boys adjourned to the cellar, to cut and



salt down what was to be their year's supply. They were, in a short time, joined by Timothy, who had been sent over on an errand, with the privilege of staying until bedtime; but who, upon finding things so much to his taste, and upon the entreaty of the boys, had run back to obtain Mrs. Carleton's consent to his remaining overnight and sleep with the boys, which consent was given.

Harry thought surely now he would hear what "Curly" brought; but, although the time was passed in cheerful conversation, not a word upon the subject nearest his heart was spoken. Then came bedtime, and taking a light, the boys went to Harry's room, and, seating themselves on the side of the bed, were soon deep in that which was uppermost in the mind of at least one of the group.

Farmer Grayson, being weary after his day's work, also retired earlier than usual, and removing his shoes, as was his custom, ascended the stairs a few moments after the boys, and, unperceived by them, gained his couch, where, without intending it, he overheard the conversation in the adjoining room.

"It was your pig, and your father's hog, if it is the way it is at home," Fred Patton was saying, as Mr. Grayson laid his head on the comfortable pillow where he purposed passing a tranquil night. "I can't tell you how many pigs and calves and lambs I have raised and thought they were mine, until they were sold; then I found my mistake. I don't care a straw now to call anything mine; I feed them because I have to and because I do not like to have them go hungry; but it



is all one to me what father gets for them, I never see a penny of the money. Charlie Burnet wrote to me after he went home last summer, and said if he was me he would come to the city, and then what I worked for would be my own, and as soon as I am old enough I am going."

"What was the last thing he sold that was yours?" asked Timothy.

"Why, the geese. I took all the care of them. They were always around Mr. Levering's mill-pond, and several times wandered off down the creek, and I had to hunt for them. I asked father if I might have two of them for my own, and he said 'yes,' three of them if I wished."

"Did you ever ask for the money when he sold anything of yours?" said Harry, earnestly.

"Never but once. That was when he sold the turkeys last year. I asked him how much my two brought. He laughed, and asked me how they came to be mine. I told him that I had fed and taken care of the whole flock. He asked me whose corn they had eaten. I said that I had never thought of that, and if he had reminded me I would have bought some corn for them of him, and paid him after I sold the turkeys. He laughed again, and said I would have found they had eaten their heads off over and over again."

"I know father will not serve me that way," said Harry, after a thoughtful pause; "but it was his corn that 'Curly' ate, that is certain. I never thought of that before," he added, doubtfully.



"Well, maybe not," said Fred; "but I know one thing certain,—the old farm will not keep me one day after I am my own master."

"What would you have bought with your turkey-money?" said Timothy, eying Fred compassionately.

"I was going to get a pair of skates, and if the money held out, 'Robinson Crusoe.'"

"That is one of the things I am going to buy, Fred," said Harry, consolingly, "and you shall read it as much as you please."

"Yes, if you get it. You had better not count on it much."

"Let us put out the light and get in bed," said Harry, "then we can talk over what I am going to buy."

"If you get the money," remarked Fred, sceptically.

"What do you call this?" cried Harry, joyfully, as he turned from the tallow dip which he was about to extinguish with a puff of his breath, extending at arm's length an envelope upon which was written "Harry's money." "Now, what do you say?" he continued, his face flushing with delight. "Didn't I tell you my father would not serve me such a trick? Hurrah! He's a trump! Now, you hold the candle, Tim, while I count it. Fifteen dollars good money! Isn't that splendid? I'll have 'Robinson Crusoe' and everything else I want out of that."

When Mrs. Grayson, who had been sitting up late making "old clothes look a'maist as weel as new," sought her rest, instead of finding Mr. Grayson



wrapped in peaceful slumber, she perceived that he was not only awake but restless and ill at ease.

“Are you sick, Daniel?” she inquired, anxiously.

“No—yes—I guess so; anyhow, I never felt quite so mean in all my life.” And he briefly recounted to her what he had overheard.

“Yes, I know it,” was the quiet response; “but that is not all. Poor Marcia has been saving that money for a long time to buy a shawl. Proud & Stirling sent to the city for one for her, and when it came they sent word to her. She went over to see it, and it was exactly what she wanted, and she told them so; but she also told them that it would be a great favor to her if they would try to dispose of it to some one else, as circumstances prevented her taking it just then.”

“Do you suppose they have sold it?” inquired Farmer Grayson, anxiously.

“No, I think not; I was over at the store this afternoon with butter and eggs, and I saw it in the window. I asked Mr. Stirling if that was the shawl they had purchased for Marcia; he said it was; and I don’t think any one would go to select a shawl after night.”

“How would it do for you to go over to the village in the morning and get it for her?” inquired Mr. Grayson.

“And let her pay for it when she earns the money?”

“No, indeed; I will give you the money to get it and a little present besides; she has taught me a lesson I do not intend to forget.”

The next day the shawl was bought and given; and



although it required persuasion to induce Marcia to accept the present, yet when she found it was a *conscience* offering she considered it wrong to refuse.

Harry consulted his father in regard to investing the "Curly" fund, and together such a judicious disposal was made of it that not a penny was foolishly spent. Two bright little pigs took part of the money, and filled "Curly's" place in the sty and in Harry's affections; "Robinson Crusoe" and a box of stationery took some more; and after several other trifles he had long wished for were purchased the balance was laid carefully aside to be invested in a calf, which should be Harry's cow when it came to cow's estate.

Farmer Grayson did not let the matter rest there. Justice had begun at home, but he made up his mind that if his counsel was of any avail, it should not stop there; so the first time he met with Fred Patton's father, which happened to be at Levering's mill, he related his bit of experience in regard to the conduct of farmers toward their sons, and, as Fred Patton told Timothy and Harry in confidence that he had changed his mind about going to the city, it is to be presumed that Farmer Grayson's homely counsel had some influence.



## CHAPTER V.

## ANGELS UNAWARES.

“Life hath its barren years,  
When blossoms fall untimely down,  
When ripened fruitage fails to crown  
The summer toil, when Nature’s frown  
Looks only on our tears.”

“‘BE not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.’ Angels unawares,” repeated Grandfather Carleton, slowly and reverently, as he arose and laid his old worn Bible on the sill of the open window by which he was sitting on the porch.

He was a noble-looking old man; handsome, although age had dimmed his eye and silvered his hair. Without being conscious of it, he formed a component part of a beautiful picture that sweet June morning; a picture which a passer-by having a love for the beautiful in his soul would have been constrained to gaze upon as long as it remained in view.

The cool, shady porch, overhung by a weeping-willow, leafy and fragrant from running vine and clustering rose, and the look of thrift and neatness which pervaded the place, gave token that Mrs. Carleton’s home was the abode of peace and refinement.

Many hours of each long summer day did Grand-



father Carleton sit in that porch, gazing dreamily upon all the beauty which surrounded him with the serene and benignant look of the aged, who, standing upon the high table-land between two worlds, views the receding form of one which he has loved because his Father made it and pronounced it good, but looking forward joyfully to the more beautiful one to which he is but awaiting his summons.

"What did you say, grandfather?" exclaimed Mrs. Carleton from within, in a somewhat querulous voice.

"I was only thinking over something I have been reading, and repeated it because it was so sweet and comforting," he replied, in his usual gentle tones.

"Oh," replied Mrs. Carleton, in a tone of relief. "I thought you said strangers were coming, and I am sure I do not want anybody to-day."

"No, dear, I do not see anybody coming. I was just reading, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'"

"That is true, grandfather; but I think I have had my share of entertaining this summer, so far, if any person ever had, and some of them will have to mend their ways if they ever hope to be angels, or I am much mistaken. I used to love visitors, until I had more than I knew what to do with; and until that county fair began to be held so near us, I did not know there was so much selfishness in the world."

"Yes, dear," said the old man, soothingly; "but I would not mind."

"There, it is nine o'clock," she thought to herself, as the old eight-day clock in the hall rang out the



hour. "I expected to have had all these garments mended by this time. I want to make a cherry-pudding for dessert, and here are two or three pieces to mend yet."

"Angels unawares," came faintly in on the summer air, and rising quietly from her chair and looking out, Mrs. Carleton saw that her father-in-law had dropped asleep, and in his dreams was murmuring the words which had occupied his waking thoughts.

"Poor old grandfather," thought she; "he is always glad to see company; he is just like a child in that respect, and I ought to be glad for that reason, if for no other, to see everybody. I don't think I am naturally stingy or inhospitable, but I do get so tired, and good help is so hard to get to assist Fannie. I never knew a house that was half-way to everywhere except this one, which brings people here just at dinner-time, or, what is still more provoking, just after it is over and everything eaten up or cold. And then that fair; I declare it makes me angry every time I think about it! Everybody must come, so they come by the dozen, 'because we are so convenient'; then, of course, Fannie wants to go, and will go too, let who must stay at home, and I have to do double work to let her off; then, what irritates me more than anything else, is to have them say while they are tying their bonnet-strings, 'Why, are you not going to the fair? and live so handy, too!' just as though I could dress and go to fairs, with all the regular work to do and enough dishes to set up a china store to put in order. Then they don't seem a bit grateful to me for entertaining



them and their unruly children. I declare I don't know how poor old grandfather stood it to have Harriet's troublesome youngsters dragging him about, clambering over him, and digging their elbows into his knees, clamoring for stories. I don't see how Harriet could let them worry her father so, but she sat simpering by, never saying a word of rebuke, because they were her children, and consequently without blemish. It would have done me the most good to have given them one good shaking before they left."

It was no meagrely spread dinner-table to which Mrs. Carleton and her family sat down that day, or, in fact, any other day. The fat and juicy poultry, crisp, fresh vegetables and ripe, luscious fruit were evidence that Mrs. Carleton believed in enjoying the benefits to be derived from living on a farm, and considered herself and family entitled to the best the farm could produce. Not that she looked upon a good table as paramount to everything else, but in her opinion it required no more time, labor, and capital to raise good stock, fruit, and vegetables than poor ones, so the best of all was what she aimed to produce. Neither did she deem it incumbent upon her to raise these things exclusively for other people, and so sell the best and keep for her own family only that which was unsalable.

Timothy had picked the cherries before going to his class that morning, and, notwithstanding the mending, the cherry-pudding was present in all its golden and ruby perfection, and was appreciated after the happy manner of the first cherry-pudding of the season.



"The stage is coming up the lane, mother," said Frank, the younger of the two sons, who was, in school-boy fashion, hurrying through his dinner in order to make good time in a game of ball before school called.

"It is Miss Jane Houston, by all that is magnificent!" said Rufus, the elder, as he glanced from the window at the stage, which had already stopped at the gate. "There she is, pattern-box and all. You are in for it now, mother, that is evident. I have seen that old pattern-box ever since I was a bald-headed baby, and would know it in Patagonia."

"You will have to hook her dress for her, and wait on her as though she were a queen, Fannie. That is what all the girls have to do where she visits," said Frank. "Then, if you should happen to meet her out anywhere, she would not speak to you, because you are a 'servant.' Would she, mother?"

"You might as well make the best of this trying dispensation, mother," said Rufus, laughingly, glancing at the discomfited face at the head of the table. "I forgot to tell you that Mrs. Porter told me she had left the 'Home,' and that we might look for her any day."

"Poor soul, she is to be pitied," murmured good old Grandfather Carleton. "Did you not say something about wanting a new gown or something made, Ellen?"

"Yes, but not with her old patterns, years behind the times. I could not have the conscience to palm off such frights upon her and then laugh about it after-



ward, as I have known some persons do. Go to the door, Fannie, and invite her into the sitting-room."

The boys betook themselves to the shady orchard for their noon's recreation, in which Grace Darling took a prominent part. She was the pet and plaything of the whole family, and it was difficult to tell which of the boys loved the dog the best. But with all the affection shown her by every member of the family, her loyal little heart remained faithful to Timothy; only him would she follow, only at his feet would she repose.

In the mean time Mrs. Carleton prepared to meet her unexpected, and it must be confessed unwelcome, visitor.

"Meet her kindly, daughter," said grandfather, taking her hand as she passed him on her way to the sitting-room. "You are by nature kind-hearted and generous; hide not your light under a bushel, but let it give light to all who are in the house."

The rather grotesque figure of Miss Jane Houston, as she always styled herself, and required others to style her, was seated on the very edge of a chair, her eyes fixed on the door she expected her hostess to enter with the same wistful, expectant expression often seen upon the countenances of dumb creatures; her patterns already in her hand, as though hoping by this poor little recompense—the only one she had to offer—to earn the privilege of tarrying for a little while in her pilgrimage through the world.

She was rather below the medium height, a little inclined to stoutness, possessed a pair of rather small



blue eyes which her fifty years of dependence had been powerless to dim, a fair, clear complexion, with a tinge of color in either cheek, yet with these advantages she was not pretty; the forehead was narrow, the eyes too close together, and the expression of the mouth, which was coarse and ill-shapen, disfigured the whole face.

She wore her hair trimmed close around her short neck, and covered with a black net cap which seemed never to require washing or renewing. As for the rest of her costume, it was made up of heterogeneous articles bestowed upon her by the different persons with whom she had sojourned; but, in spite of the disadvantages pertaining to this mode of being clad, her appearance was always ladylike and genteel. Her manner and accent were French, yet she was born on English soil, of English parents, but for more than thirty years had been an out-pensioner of the Stars and Stripes.

She arose upon Mrs. Carleton's entrance and came toward her, her elbows partly raised, and with a flap-wing motion indigenous to Miss Jane Houston and nobody else, and in a puffy, wheezy voice, which Mrs. Carleton had always averred was the most disagreeable sound in the world, said, hurriedly,—

“I did not know but you were out; I got the stage-driver to stop at Mrs. General Porter's and at Mrs. Colonel Hoyt's, but both ladies, unfortunately, were out, so I thought I would spend a little while with you, and help you with your summer outfit.”

The “word in season” of Grandfather Carleton had fallen upon good soil; it sprang up, blossomed, and bore fruit in the short journey between the two rooms;



and Mrs. Carleton extended to Miss Jane a more cordial welcome than she had ever before vouchsafed her, under the unexpected stimulus of which Miss Jane's spirits revived, like wilted grass under a summer shower. Mrs. Carleton had *met* her kindly, and Miss Jane knew by years of eleemosynary experience that anything in the shape of a welcome was everything; let her but get a foothold, and all the rest was plain sailing.

"Will you step into the dining-room and have some dinner, Miss Jane?" asked Mrs. Carleton, kindly.

"Thank you, I shall be glad to; I expected to dine with Mrs. General Porter or Mrs. Colonel Hoyt, but as neither of those ladies were at home, I shall be glad to pay you a visit. I can go there some other time."

Now Mrs. Carleton knew that Mrs. Porter would not have been out to anybody but Miss Jane Houston; and as for Mrs. Hoyt, Mrs. Carleton and Mrs. Porter were invited to take tea with her that very evening, so it was not likely she was out either; but if Miss Jane did not suspect, why enlighten her?

"These peas are so delicious," commented Miss Jane a few moments afterwards, as she helped herself bountifully for the second time. She had been so long compelled to push her way, that what most of her entertainers denounced as her impudence she considered but a proper consideration for her own wants.

"I am invited out to tea this afternoon, Miss Jane," remarked Mrs. Carleton, as she and her guest adjourned to the porch, where Grandfather Carleton was already asleep in his arm-chair; "I hope you will excuse my going, as I received the invitation before you came."



"Oh, certainly; do not make a stranger of me, I pray. I will take a little sleep this afternoon, and shall enjoy myself during your absence, I know."

"You have a visitor, have you not?" remarked Mrs. Hoyt, as soon as her visitors were seated in her cool and pleasant parlor. "I watched the stage after it left the village, and saw it turn into your lane."

"It stopped at yours, too, I was informed; but as you were not at home, I came in second best," answered Mrs. Carleton, pleasantly.

"She called at our house also," remarked Mrs. Porter; "but I have not a particle of sympathy for her since she returned from the 'Home.' Just to think, when a good, quiet place was provided for her, where she could have ended her days, her entrance-fee collected without any trouble or exertion to herself, she left in three weeks, because her room was next to a woman who had worked for her support."

"Yes, she told me of that while she was taking her dinner," said Mrs. Carleton; "but she did not give that as the cause of her leaving. She said the confined life would have killed her; she never drew a contented breath while she was there. She said she could not endure the society of the other inmates, she felt so superior to them."

"Indeed! and what is she but a pauper, pray?" said Mrs. Porter, warmly. "It appears to me I would endure anything where I felt I had a right, rather than put up with the sneers and slights she receives from everybody; that is, if she ever feels them."

"I have about come to the conclusion that she has



neither feeling nor honest pride in her composition, or she would be too independent to sponge around where she is not wanted," said Mrs. Hoyt.

"Yet she has her good properties," remarked Mrs. Carleton; "her principles are sound. I never heard of her repeating in one house anything that transpired in another; she is extremely cautious in that respect."

"Yes, I grant she is harmless, but so worthless. I really do not see what she is on earth for only to bother people."

"Well, I suppose we should make some allowance for the way she has been trained," interposed a sister of Mrs. Hoyt, who was staying with her, and whom she had invited Mrs. Carleton and Mrs. Porter to meet.

"Fiddlestick! who knows how she has been trained? We only have her story for it, and we know her whole conversation runs on property and how she is kept out of it by her uncle, whom she says was her guardian, and of her expectation of getting it soon; and we all know how much dependence to put in that."

"Yes, but she is truthful," exclaimed Mrs. Carleton. "Mrs. Archibald Levering once told me that her brother, Dr. Harkness, who lives in St. Louis, was well acquainted with Miss Jane's uncle and his family, and that they certainly live in great style; and it is the impression with many persons there that it is upon his niece's money, of which he, as her guardian, robbed her."

"Well, I don't know," said Mrs. Porter, doubtfully; "I only know that the President and the governor, and all the rest of the government dignitaries have had



their surfeit of petitions. I guess they just laugh at her and let the matter end where it began."

"But how does she travel in cars and steamboats and stages free of charge?" said Mrs. Hoyt. "I never heard of anybody else being so favored."

"How does she creep into our homes and stay as long as she pleases? I never heard of anybody inviting her, nor of anybody turning her out when they get tired of her. And, then, it must be the best places, too; no shoddy or poverty for her; she must go where there is somebody to wait on her, and she does get waited on, too, although the girls themselves know that she would not speak to them if she met them out."

"I must say I was amused the last time she visited me," said Mrs. Hoyt. "She had heard me say I was fond of ginger-cakes, and never could meet with any that tasted like those we had when I was a child. She urged me to let Gretchen bake some from a recipe Mrs. Senator somebody or other had given her, for she never knows anybody but big-bugs. I let Gretchen bake the cakes, and they were really excellent, as far as I could judge by the taste I got. They were baked one afternoon. I ate one at tea that evening, and she ate the balance before the next tea-time."

"But, does she never sew?" inquired the sister, who had but slight knowledge of Miss Jane and her attributes.

"Oh, yes, she always asks for it, and insists upon having it," replied Mrs. Porter; "but, dear me, it is a perfect martyrdom to see her sew. It appears to me she cannot settle herself long enough to accomplish



anything worth talking about, and the consequence is one gets sick and tired of seeing the garment lying about. She made a dress for Maud the three months she stayed with us last winter, and I vow I thought the child would outgrow it before it was finished. It had three ruffles on it, to be sure, and was really a curiosity, it was so beautifully made; but there was not a nook nor cranny about the house where shreds and scraps of that dress could not have been found during its construction."

Miss Jane was promenading up and down the lawn path, halting every now and then to cull some flower that pleased her fancy, when Mrs. Carleton reached home that evening.

"Have had a most delightful afternoon," she averred. "I slept until nearly tea-time, then dressed for tea; since then have been enjoying this labyrinth of sweets. I hope you had a pleasant visit, Mrs. Carleton."

"Very pleasant, indeed."

"And did Mrs. General Porter or Mrs. Colonel Hoyt inquire for me? I am sure they did, for we are such old friends."

"I believe they did," faltered Mrs. Carleton. "But had we better not go in the house, Miss Jane? the evening air grows chilly."

"Perhaps we had," replied Miss Jane, in a depressed tone; and while Mrs. Carleton went to lay aside her bonnet and gloves she took a chair at the side of Grandfather Carleton on the porch, and commenced from the beginning to inform him of her disappointments and hopes in regard to her property.



"But my prospects are better now than they have been for a long time," she said, in conclusion. "I have just returned from Washington, where I went to obtain legal advice in regard to my property, and two members of Congress have given me their best wishes for its recovery, and have promised to use their best endeavors to aid me to obtain it. They say it is really too bad that I have been kept out of it so long; so I am living in hourly expectation of a messenger from my uncle in St. Louis telling me that he has given my property back to me."

"I hope you will be so fortunate; I hope so, indeed, Miss Jane; you have my very best wishes also," replied Grandfather Carleton.

"Thank you! you are very kind. I have so many kind friends. Good-night."

An hour after every member of the family except Mrs. Carleton had retired to rest, in passing Miss Jane's door, her footsteps were arrested by the sound of suppressed but bitter weeping. Spellbound she stood, revolving in her mind what was best to be done. Should she enter, ask the cause, and try to comfort? Would it not be looked upon as an intrusion? She feared so, and yet she could not bear to think of sorrow under her roof and make no effort to alleviate it. Knocking gently, and softly calling Miss Jane's name, she waited admission.

A few moments of delay and the door opened, and Mrs. Carleton was politely bidden to enter.

Miss Jane was too well-bred to show any sign of surprise at the ill-timed visit; apparently all her



thoughts were bent upon entertaining her visitor. It seemed as though her opportunities for showing hospitality had always been so limited that she was gratified with this chance of evincing it. The most comfortable chair in the room was drawn up for her guest, while she took another, with her back to the light.

Her open Bible and prayer-book were lying upon the table, beside which she had evidently been sitting. Her black net cap had been removed and carefully hung upon a chair-back, and Mrs. Carleton seeing her for the first time in her life without it, could not help noticing how careworn and haggard she looked.

Not the least allusion to her sorrow did Miss Jane make, and Mrs. Carleton could not introduce the subject, so her call consisted in merely ascertaining that Miss Jane was fixed comfortably for the night, that she should not disturb herself to rise early in the morning, and then—good-night!

Then Mrs. Carleton went to her own room, lay awake the best part of the night, and pondered. "Was this dark hour an unusual occurrence with the poor wanderer, or was it but one of many? the cheerful every-day manner but a veil to hide the ever sad and desolate heart?" Mrs. Carleton resolved to watch her guest narrowly the ensuing morning, and see if the night-time conflict left any token by which she could judge.

As for herself, she would try to make her more welcome than she had ever done. It was possible that the bread of dependence might be bitter to even Miss



Jane Houston; she would do all in her power to render it less so. Toward morning she dropped into a troubled slumber, and when they met at breakfast no one would have supposed by Miss Jane's manner that she had wept herself to sleep.

"If she would only be a little more humble," said Mrs. Carleton to grandfather a few weeks afterward, "I could have more sympathy for her and exert myself to make her feel welcome; instead of that, she takes everything as a matter of course and as her due. I would like to see her grateful and make some acknowledgment of her dependence."

One evening, Timothy, who had been to the village post-office, returned with the mail, which, contrary to the usual allowance, consisted of but one newspaper, and that was the *Morning Telegram*, the first copy Timothy had seen since he had left the city.

The boy was in fine spirits that evening, as indeed he was at all times; he felt that he had such an excellent home, was leading such a happy life, was enjoying such perfect health, and Cousin Melie had said that very day that she never had a pupil who learned so fast and retained all he acquired.

Mrs. Carleton was training a refractory rose up the lattice-work of the porch, wherein were seated grandfather and Miss Jane, as Timothy, with Grace Darling frolicking and barking by his side, came up the gravelled walk. Miss Jane looked paler than usual, and her eyes had a far-away, dim look, as though they had shed many tears.

As Timothy drew near he could not resist the



temptation to echo his old-time cry, "Here's your *Morning Telegram*! Only two cents!"

Miss Jane looked at the boy narrowly, and then appeared lost in thought.

"There was an old lady," said she, as grandfather opened the paper, wondering at the same time who could have sent it—"there was an old lady at the 'Home' when I was there who used to talk a good deal about 'Timothy' and the *Morning Telegram*."

Timothy's face glowed with surprise and joy. "Please tell me her name," he said.

"They called her Granny; that is all I knew of her," she replied, a little stiffly. "She never talked to me, of course; I only overheard her with others; her room was next to mine."

Timothy had been faithful in his attentions to Miss Jane, as indeed he ever was to any guest of Mrs. Carleton; had made innumerable inquiries at the post-office for letters for her, which never came; had brought her glasses of water whenever requested, no matter how inconvenient the time; had gathered her a bouquet of wild-flowers every time he returned from taking grain to Levering's mill; had even brushed her shoes; yet she had never condescended to speak to him, except to utter a command. But something in the boy's countenance prompted her to take an interest in telling him all she could of the woman, whom Timothy could not doubt was Granny Edmonds.

It appeared that Mrs. Longman, whom Timothy had helped to surprise once upon a time, had seen an account of the fire in Hammer's Alley, and having taken the



address of all the newsboys that evening of the party, had called next day, and upon inquiry at the house adjoining the burned tenement, found that granny and Timothy had been taken to the hospital. As soon as she could, she paid it a visit, but Timothy was gone. She called again and again to see granny, and her heart was moved in compassion for the helpless, homeless creature, and as soon as she was able to be moved, Mrs. Longman enlisted the sympathies of some ladies, who procured her admission into that noble institution, "The Aged Woman's Home."

Timothy listened with rapt attention, his heart expanding with thankfulness; and in the fulness of his joy he took Miss Jane's soft white hand in his and pressed his lips upon it with as much reverence as though it were that of a queen.

The glorious summer waned into hazy autumn, and still Miss Jane lingered. It appeared as though she lacked energy to make a start. A change had come over her in these months,—not speedy nor startling, but still there was a change. She was cheerful as ever when awake, but she slept so much, she was so languid, so weary.

She ceased to speak of the property which was hers by right; for weeks her uncle's name had not passed her lips. Each morning her rising was delayed a little longer, and one bright morning in October, her last on earth, she was too weak to rise. Few outside that family circle knew, or cared to know, that her pilgrimage was nearly finished.

"She was not ill, only tired," she averred, when



Mrs. Carleton begged to be allowed to send for her family physician, Dr. Linthicum; she wanted only to be alone with them.

"Thank God!" she murmured, lifting her fast dimming eyes to heaven, "my wanderings are nearly over. I am going *home*, and none but those who are homeless can appreciate that dear name as it deserves. You have all been so kind to me," she continued, gazing at the sorrowing ones around her, among whom was Timothy, weeping silently. "I have prayed God to reward you all, and I feel sure that he will. If you ever see my uncle, tell him I forgive him for betraying the trust reposed in him, forgive him for my blighted life. I tried to forget it, and live as though I had no expectations, but I could not; I was always waiting—waiting. Perhaps it was best that I never had my share of life's benefits, but hope deferred has been very, very bitter."

A pause of exhaustion followed. Mrs. Carleton bathed her damp forehead with bay-water, and administered a spoonful of cordial.

"I have nothing to bequeath," whispered Miss Jane, smiling sadly, "nothing to recompense you all for your kindness to me; only one little token of gratitude can I leave you," said she, pressing Mrs. Carleton's hand,— "my prayer-book; take it with the blessing of the desolate one you have befriended. My Bible is for Timothy; read it, dear boy, faithfully and prayerfully: it has been my only solace in this vale of tears. Bid my friends farewell for me. I tried to be patient, and not envy those who had home and friends, and at



whose firesides I felt I was not needed or wanted, but it is all done with at last."

If one were endeavoring merely to tell a pleasing story, the false and recreant uncle should have been allowed to die before this time, and his last hours be rendered so harrowing, that to ease his conscience he was compelled to make restitution of his ill-gotten gains; but, being a real experience, it can only be recorded that he did die a very short time after Miss Jane's demise: he died surrounded not only by every luxury, but by loving sons and daughters, who inherited his property.

It would also have been gratifying to have known that Mrs. Carleton and her family were amply rewarded for their disinterested kindness to his forlorn relative; but it can only be said that in God's own time and manner it cannot be doubted her prayers for them were answered. As for themselves, they felt amply recompensed in the deep and abiding happiness they enjoyed in believing that they had entertained an angel, though not altogether unawares.



## CHAPTER VI.

## ARCHIBALD LEVERING, AND HIS SON'S WIDOW.

“Sometimes it happens, too,  
A plain bird is more beautiful  
Than one of gorgeous hue.”

AND so it had really come to pass. The hopes and plans of many months were about to bear fruit; the Bryors had moved out of the brownstone front, and the Leverings were on the eve of moving in.

The mansion in question was a handsome residence, and on a pleasant street, although but a few squares from Hammer's Alley, where stood the tenement-house, the home of Timothy.

Strange, when the long-wished-for prize was at length in her possession, that Mrs. Levering, sitting alone by her smouldering kitchen-range hours after the rest of the family were, she supposed, wrapped in peaceful slumber, should be shedding the bitterest tears she had ever shed in her whole life. She had exerted herself that day beyond her strength, and much of her depression might have been attributed to that cause, yet her comfortable couch was the very last place she wished to seek. She recoiled from the feverish wakefulness and restless turning of the past two nights, and could not summon resolution to encounter a third. She even caught herself wishing that the brownstone front



would take fire and burn down before morning, thus saving her the mortifications she prophesied would follow her taking possession.

The clock on the kitchen mantel had tolled eleven, and she had just sobbed herself into that brooding quietness which showed that her thoughts had wandered for a season from her troubles to other and pleasanter themes, when the click of the door-latch aroused her, and we must confess alarmed her also; for Mrs. Levering was by no means a brave woman, and this night in particular she was unusually nervous and timid. She turned a pair of rather frightened eyes toward the door, which was slowly but surely opening, as she scanned its full length with fast beating heart. Her relief was great indeed when, instead of the burly form and rough visage of the burglar she feared to see, the white-robed figure of her little son Archie came blinking toward her.

"Why, Archie, my dear boy, what is the matter? How did you know I was down here?" said she, slipping her moist handkerchief in her pocket and holding her hand out to him.

"Because I have not been asleep. I could not go to sleep for thinking. Let me stay down here with you, mother, do."

Mrs. Levering could not resist this humble appeal; moreover, she was so miserable herself that it was comforting to have even this frail staff to lean upon, so her remonstrance was feeble.

"But, Archie, we should both be in bed this minute; to-morrow with its sorrows and cares will soon be here,



and I have very little strength to meet it; but we will be separated so soon, my precious boy, so come and sit here a moment, and tell me what has kept you from sleep."

Archie came quickly forward and took the stool at his mother's feet; resting an arm on her lap, he pressed one of the long curls which had escaped from her comb to his lips.

"Mother, what kind of a man is my grandfather?"

Mrs. Levering started. By what subtle agency had her son been made cognizant of the subject of her musings, and had come at that moment to know the result? She could not, for any consideration, have told him her real opinion of her father-in-law, yet he had been the subject of her thoughts ever since she had given her consent for Archie to live with him, her husband's death having left her with three children to provide for, of whom Archie was the eldest.

"I can scarcely tell you, my son," replied she, slowly. "You know I never lived with your grandfather, and it is said you must winter and summer with persons before you really know them."

"But how did you like him when you used to go out there? You said you were there when I was a baby; why have you never gone since I can remember? say, mother; I never thought of it before."

"Your grandfather was never quite satisfied with me, Archie. I had always lived in the city, and knew nothing of country work and country customs; and, what was worse in his eyes, I did not care to learn; he could not overlook that."



"Did he ever say anything to father about it?" said Archie, softly.

"Your father never told me that he did, but he could not fail to see that his father was dissatisfied with me."

"I expect he will not be satisfied with me, either," said Archie, after a pause; "for I have always lived in the city, and know nothing of country work or ways."

"You are but a little boy, Archie. Your grandfather will not expect much of you; not as much, I hope, as he did of your father at your age."

"Jerry Murry says I will have to shell corn, and feed chickens, and drive cows to pasture, and all such things, for that is what boys do in the country. I will like to do that, but oh, mother, I wish you were going, too! I will be so lonely without you. Why does grandfather want you to stay here and keep a stingy old boarding-house?"

With all her sorrow and anxiety, Mrs. Levering could not restrain a smile at the earnestness of her boy, but it was quickly followed by a sigh.

"Your grandfather knows I must do something to support myself and your little sisters, and he thinks that taking boarders is the best thing I can do."

They both remained buried in thought for a time, the silence being at length broken by Archie.

"But, mother, you must have liked him, or you would not have named me for him; such an ugly name, too, —Archibald; the boys all make fun of it."

"Your father named you, my dear. It is an old-time name, to be sure, but when it is softened to



Archie it is really very pretty. He did it to gratify his father. He was always respectful to him, and I hope you will follow his example."

"I am polite to polite people," said the boy, sturdily. "Grandfather is not very polite to me; he says all I am good for is to whistle and to tear my clothes."

"He has not been enough with you to have an interest in you, my son. Try and do your duty by him in every way, just as you would have done with your father had he lived, and God will incline his heart to love you, I am sure."

"Grandmother has an interest in me, and loves me, too. Oh, mother, I am glad she is there! It is next best to having you."

"Your grandmother is one of the best women that ever lived. How she has ever endured—— Archie!" she said, suddenly recollecting that she was speaking of her dead husband's father to that husband's son, "we must really go to bed, or morning will be here, and your grandfather with it, before we are aware of it."

Archie arose and proceeded as far as the door, followed by Mrs. Levering, when he thought of another question.

"Do you think, mother, he will ever let me go fishing in his creek, or catch rabbits in snares, or gather nuts for winter? Jerry Murry says that is what he did in the country."

"I have heard your father say that your grandfather was very strict with him when a boy, and gave him very little time for play. Some persons get more strict as they grow older; some get more indulgent. I can-



not tell how it is with him now in regard to children ; but I doubt not there will be little odds and ends of time which you can have to yourself. And now, dear son," she continued, as they reached his little white-robed bed, "mother will kiss you and tuck you in for the second time this evening. Good-night, my precious boy, good-night !"

She kissed him several times, murmured a loving lullaby over him, then sought her own couch and wept until dawn.

Before proceeding further a retrospective glance must be taken, in order to understand why it was that Mrs. Levering, after being so eager to occupy the brownstone front, should now have so entirely changed her mind in regard to it. It was only another evidence of the changes a few weeks, or even hours, will sometimes make in one's destiny.

The dwelling in question had been owned by a wealthy man named Bryor, who had upon his death-bed willed it to his two sons in such a manner that not only a lawsuit was the result, but a lifelong estrangement between the brothers.

The boys had been educated at the Dorton Academy, and while students there, Richard Bryor, the younger of the two, met and loved Miss Sarah Ogilvie, of "Ogilvie's Pride," the handsome villa near Dorton. Mark Bryor, who was several years older than Richard, also met a young girl to whom he gave his best affections ; but his parents' opposition was so violent, and his habit of obedience so strong, that he was constrained to sacrifice his happiness to their wishes.



Reserved and silent by nature, he became more so after this disappointment, and in order to induce him to forget the rural maiden, his father arranged with a mercantile friend to have him sent to Europe upon a business tour for the firm. After completing the commission intrusted to him, Mark, apparently having no encouragement to come home, remained abroad, only returning after receiving news of his father's death.

In the mean time, Richard had married Miss Ogilvie, and his mother having died the first year of Mark's absence from his native land, Richard brought his wife to his father's house, and there they remained until the death of Mr. Bryor. This was followed by the lawsuit, which was won by Mark, and Richard Bryor and his family were compelled to leave the brownstone front. It appeared that pursuit was better than possession in Mark Bryor's eyes, for he cared so little for the place that, as soon as it was legally his, he sold it, having bought a farm near the village of Dorton, and adjoining that of Mrs. Carleton. In this way David Levering, then a rising young lawyer, considering it a safe investment, had become the purchaser of the brownstone front.

Mrs. Levering was delighted; it was a handsomer house by far than any of those owned by her acquaintances, and all her energies were bent upon saving from their rather limited income to furnish it properly when the time should come to take possession, when, alas! just a few weeks before Mr. Richard Bryor moved out, David Levering died, leaving poor Mrs. Levering and her three children to battle with the world alone.



Her mother-in-law, a gentle, meek-tempered woman, came at the first note of distress,—as she always had done since her son David had married and left her,—and stayed as long as she felt she was sorely needed. Archibald Levering came to the funeral, entering his daughter-in-law's house for the first time since she had been his daughter-in-law, and departed with the others who had come to pay the last tribute of respect to the remains of his only son.

Mrs. Levering never could tell how she lived through the first few weeks following her husband's death. She had been so shocked by the sudden bereavement that she had but little thought for anything beyond, and was sitting one rainy morning by one of the windows in the nursery, with her babe upon her lap, looking absently at the watery streets, idly tapping the window to amuse the infant, and thinking—thinking. The dampness of the morning had tempted her pliant hair into many little curling tendrils, which gave an even more youthful look to her sweet, expressive face. Her dress of sombre black, unrelieved by hint of color, her fair complexion and slight, graceful figure, were set off to the best advantage by the rich background of the crimson plush chair in which she reclined.

She had heard a ring at the hall-door a few moments before, and had heard the servant admit a visitor. She had seen her father-in-law's old-fashioned carriage pass up the street at an early hour that morning, therefore was not surprised to hear the sound of a cane ascending the steps and the firm, even tread along the hall which led to the nursery, betokening the appearance of Archi-



bald Levering. He opened the door without the preliminary knock, which with other social amenities and courtesies Mrs. Levering had ceased long ago to expect from her husband's father, and stood hat on head on the threshold.

He was of medium size, with clear, cold blue eyes, and with that fair, smooth complexion peculiar to persons of his calling. His hair, also, had been light in color and abundant, but was now thin and of a yellowish white, and hung straggling, though perfectly smooth and well kept, over the velvet collar of his coat. In fact, his whole appearance, though out of date, being at least thirty years behind the times, was neat and trim.

His attire was the suit of blue broadcloth bought for his wedding, and which since then had known neither change nor repair. The brass buttons, of which there was a liberal supply, might have been a little dimmer, the color of the cloth a shade paler, the waist of the coat a few inches too short for the prevailing style, even in his own estimation; but notwithstanding all this, to Archibald Levering it was all that was required. It was donned for funerals and upon his rare visits to the city, and upon his return home was carefully brushed and restored to its wonted peg in the spare bedroom closet by his patient wife, Mercy.

The hat which he had not yet removed was a tall silk one, also bought for his wedding, but which showed even more signs of antiquity than the suit of blue, although most of its days were spent in the parlor cupboard of his home, carefully wrapped in the red



bandanna handkerchief which, when the hat was in use, lightly reposed upon the crown of the wearer.

That hat had been worn to his son's funeral, and the neighbors and acquaintances of the bereaved widow had not yet ceased laughing at its antiquated appearance. In fact, the whole make-up of the old man had provoked many mirthful though good-natured comments, which, if they had been repeated to him, would not have cost him anything more than a passing sneer at the empty-headedness and frivolity of his critics.

In his youth he might have been handsome; his features were finely chiselled, and his expression was open and intelligent; but he appeared like one who had lived through some early sorrow, which he had never made an effort to conquer, but had allowed it to form a background to all his after-life, casting its sombre shade over every bright and pleasant thing, and because of the magnitude which he accorded it rendering all else in life only something to be endured.

He was utterly indifferent to the world and its opinions; so indifferent, indeed, that he was oblivious to the fact that he was looked upon as eccentric and singular by his neighbors and friends. Solitary by nature, and rendered more so by the circumstances of his life, he sought no society and apparently wished for none. The clatter of his grist-mill was all the company he desired through the day, and a book on agriculture or geology all he appeared to require for his evenings. Narrow-minded and arbitrary he certainly was; but those who had dealings with him



found him truthful, single-minded, and honest as the day.

"The girl down-stairs told me you were alone, Amanda," said he, as his daughter-in-law arose to welcome him, "and I was glad to hear it; for I want to have a talk with you about business, and I did not want any of your quality visitors dawdling around."

Mrs. Levering was a little startled at the word "business," as in truth she would have been at any proposition coming from her father-in-law; but she replied mechanically, as she offered him a rocking-chair, which he waved aside, and took a plain windsor instead,—

"Very well, father; let me take your hat and cane."

There was no reply, neither did he make any move to remove his hat or relinquish his cane, so Mrs. Levering quietly resumed her seat, and awaited developments.

"How much money had David about him at the time of his death?" he asked, abruptly.

"Do you mean how much did he have in the house?" she inquired.

"Certainly, I mean just that," he said, grimly.

"Very little; I believe he kept it at his office, or at the bank, or somewhere," she answered, vaguely.

"Do you know anything about his business?" he continued. "Did he ever consult you about it?"

"No, very little; never that I remember of, except about buying the house."

"And you never took any interest in it?" said her father-in-law, deprecatingly; "just went blindly on,



living from hand to mouth, and with no more care for the future than the birds of the air."

"I supposed my husband was perfectly competent to attend to his affairs," replied Mrs. Levering, a little petulantly. "He never asked my advice, and I did not know it was needed. How should I?"

A silence followed. Her visitor rested his crossed hands upon the head of his cane, and gazed gloomily into the glowing grate. Mrs. Levering gazed steadily from the window at the streaming rain.

"You play on the piano, Amanda," said Mr. Levering, arousing from his revery. "Do you think you could earn your living by it?"

"I do not imagine I shall be called upon to do anything of the kind, father. I suppose we will go on living as we have done heretofore."

He looked at her as one might regard a perverse child.

"You have not answered me, Amanda; I want you to think, and tell me exactly what you can do in that way."

"I can play pretty well, father, and had intended teaching our children myself, so as to save David from paying for lessons," she said, with a sob, as the thought of her lonely widowhood came over her.

"So you do not know enough to teach other people's children?" he said, almost sadly, as she endeavored to check her tears.

"I do, if they would only think so; but every one wants experienced teachers for their children, and you know I am not that."



“Could you earn anything by making these gim-cracks women nowadays waste their time on?” said he, pointing with his cane to the tidies and other fancy articles which ornamented the room.

“I do not suppose any person would care to pay much for what I could make,” replied she, more for the sake of giving an answer than for any interest she took in the conversation. “My work would be considered very plain by persons who do such things for money.”

“Could you teach school?”

Mrs. Levering, patient by nature and trained from childhood to respect her elders, was growing restive under this avalanche of questions.

“Really, father, I do not know what I could do if there were necessity for it; but school-teaching would be the very last thing I would do. I have a good enough education, I suppose, but I could not stand competition with those who are trained to it; besides, I dislike it.”

“It is no use to ask you about housework,” said he, glancing at the small white hands, from which the rings had been removed, and a solitary mourning band taken their place. “What do you think of doing?”

“Mr. Bryor’s family left several weeks ago; so we will move into our house shortly, and my mother, who since my father’s death has no one with her but the servants, will come to live with us. She will bring only her maid, which will be sufficient, she thinks, with the servants we have, for a larger establishment than either is now keeping alone.”



"Do you know how much David paid on the house?"

"I heard him say once that he did not pay much. One day when mamma was here they were talking about it, and she went his security, or on his paper or something."

"Yes, and will lose every dollar of it for her pains," said Mr. Levering, roughly.

Mrs. Levering was aroused at last.

"What did you say, father? Why will she lose it? The house is still there."

"Amanda, you did not ask my advice nor assistance in this matter, and I suppose you did not want it; but your husband was my son, and I cannot help but feel an interest in his children. I heard his affairs were crippled, so made it my business to inquire into them. I employed a lawyer to ferret it out, and find, after all the debts have been paid, you will not have a dollar. Your mother, it seems, has been going on his paper ever since he was married, and let me tell you he had no more business to buy that house than I would have to buy Niagara Falls for a water-power for my mill; the consequence is she, like yourself, is not worth a dollar."

The color had been slowly receding from Mrs. Levering's face while her father-in-law had been speaking, and when the last word dropped from his lips her eyes closed, and Mr. Levering had only time to spring forward and take the infant from her unresisting arms ere she fell back in a deep swoon.

"Well, women do beat all nature!" said he, almost



angrily. "One minute chipper and independent as you please, and the next lying around like dead weeds. Now, what is to be done?"

The brilliant scarlet and green bell-cord hung within reach of his hand; but bell-cords and bells played but little part in Archibald Levering's home-spun existence. If he had noticed it at all, it was coupled in his mind with the tidies and other "gimcracks" which met his view on every side, all of which he denominated as "trash," of neither beauty nor use. He seized his cane and gave several resounding raps on the nursery floor to summon assistance, but they only served to alarm the infant, who set up a terrified scream, without bringing any of the servants, who, not being accustomed to being summoned in this primitive manner, were chatting and flirting on the area steps with the coachman next door, in blissful ignorance that they were wanted.

In the mean time, Mr. Levering was doing what little he knew in the way of reviving the unconscious woman. His wife, Mercy, had never fainted in her life, weak, nervous woman though she was; and Hesba, his maiden sister, had nerves as strong as her will, and that was saying much for them, so his experience was limited. In the emergency he was compelled to do something, so he clapped her soft hands between his hard palms, raised the window, and fanned her with an almanac that happened to be within reach; then, as a new thought struck him, went to the washstand and returned with a glass of water, with which he bathed her pallid face.

He was at his wit's end, and was on the point of



leaving her to summon assistance, when she opened her eyes and feebly reached out for her wailing babe. Mr. Levering quickly raised it from the floor, where he had placed it in his perplexity, and restored it to her arms, and with a sigh of relief resumed his chair and took his cane.

He had no love for his daughter-in-law; in his heart he looked upon her as a "useless affair," and the last woman he would have selected as a wife for his son, had he wished him to marry at all, which he did not; but now, as he saw her so wan and so subdued, for the moment he relented toward her, and a ray of compassion stole into his chilled heart; one beam of sympathy and pity for her who had for a few years walked beside the only being on earth who, until she crossed his path, had never given him a pang of disappointment.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### A LAWYER'S ADVICE.

"If wise thou art, take counsel of the wise;  
Mayhap his views from thine divergent run;  
Yet, shouldst thou use his wisdom, time may prove  
Two heads have been more use to thee than one."

LAWYERS' offices are not, upon an average, the most fascinating place of resort in the world. Very few persons indeed, with the exception of the lawyers



themselves, who have a personal interest in each of the few articles their sanctums contain, look upon them with much more favor than upon the waiting-room of a depot.

Lawyer Dubreuil's office, however, was a happy exception to this almost universal rule. It was really as comfortable and cheerful a place as one would wish to see upon an autumn day. A bright carpet covered the floor, the sunny windows were gay with plants in bloom, a canary sung in its green and gilded cage, and the stove was a marvel of brightness.

Lawyer Dubreuil was a born housekeeper, which did not prevent him at the same time from being an able and popular lawyer. He was a bachelor,—a bachelor, he jocosely affirmed, from choice, because he had never as yet been able to find a being of the gentler sex without fault, failing, or foible; and Mrs. Lauren Dubreuil must be absolute perfection.

One morning, a few days after Archibald Levering's visit to his son David's widow, the little lawyer was busily and fussily superintending the operation of tidying his office, which operation was of daily occurrence; and, for the time being, the position of Jim, the colored office-boy, was not to be envied. The daily lighting of the fire, sweeping, and dusting were required to be completed before his employer left the precincts of his boarding-house, and woe betide Jim if a speck of dust was visible when that Argus-eyed gentleman appeared upon the scene.

On this particular morning there was a little extra cleaning on hand. The windows, from which the



plants had been removed for the purpose, were undergoing a thorough polishing; the finishing-touches were about being put on by Jim, aided by a piece of chamois-skin, when Archibald Levering, seated in his old-fashioned carriage, and driving his ancient gray horse, was seen for the second time that week stopping before the door of Lawyer Dubreuil's office. He descended slowly from the vehicle, placed the lashless whip in the socket, and after tying the hitching-strap as securely as though the old horse would run away if it got a chance, he nodded his head with an air of concluding to risk it, and entered.

"Why, how do you do, my dear sir, how do you do?" said the little lawyer, with the sprightly effusion he always evinced on meeting a client. "Being a little early, you have caught me superintending my household affairs. Well, well, the early bird catches the worm. Take a seat, my dear sir, take a seat; I shall be at liberty in a moment. Jim! a little more polishing of that left-hand corner of the first pane in the third row of sash. Thoroughness, my dear sir," turning to Mr. Levering, "thoroughness in every particular has been my maxim through life; nothing like it, in my opinion, to insure success."

It will be observed that the little man's maxims were not always original, but that small matter did not trouble him a whit.

"Now, Jim, put the plants back in the windows; give Pete his seed and fresh water, and then vamoose with your brooms and buckets; I must to business."

Jim took his departure, and Lawyer Dubreuil turned



to his mirror, adjusted his faultless necktie, brushed an imaginary speck of dust from his spotless suit of black, then turning to his visitor, with an abrupt change from his every-day business manner, said, in a friendly and sincere tone, "Well, Archibald, what can I do for you this morning?"

The conference was uninterrupted. The two students came in and seated themselves silently at their respective desks, and in a few moments were apparently as oblivious to the conversation and all other outward things as the paper over which their pens so rapidly travelled.

"I will attend to it, my dear sir,—attend to it immediately," said Mr. Dubreuil, as his visitor arose to depart. "Promptness and despatch have been my maxim through life; nothing like it, in my opinion, to insure success. Before I have taken my dinner I shall have seen Mrs. Garrigue and made her acquainted with the proposition."

"As coming from you, Lauren," interposed Mr. Levering. "Let not my name be mentioned in the matter; and in the affair of taking the boy, let the offer appear as coming from my wife."

"All right, my dear sir, all right; the best heart in the world, but always would hide your light under a bushel. Well, well, you shall be gratified; secrecy, without creating a mystery, has been my maxim through life. Jim!" calling from the window, "go down to the stables and tell them to send up the very best carriage and span they have on hand this morning. Tell them to have everything in apple-pie order about it, and to have it at the door in about an hour."



Jim went.

“To pay respect to the feelings of the ladies, my dear sir,” turning to Mr. Levering, “has been my maxim through life; nothing flatters them so much as a fine equipage standing before their door; the neighbors see it, you see. It is an innocent little foible which we should strive to humor;” then catching sight of Mr. Levering’s turnout, he added, promptly, “and by *we*, my dear sir, I mean those whom they employ to wait upon them: their lawyer, their physician, etc.,—their servants, as it were,—ha! ha! Good-morning, my dear sir, good-morning!”

Mrs. Garrigue did not keep Lawyer Dubreuil waiting, yet it was long enough to give him a chance to look for dust but find none. His office was spotless, but not more so than Mrs. Garrigue’s parlor.

“Fine woman, fine woman,” thought the little man, as he heard her descending the stairs; “always respectably dressed, not going slipshod about the house and keeping callers waiting half a day while she makes a toilet suitable for a ball-room.”

There was a striking resemblance between Mrs. Garrigue and her daughter, the widow of David Levering, and the deep mourning both wore aided the resemblance. Time had dealt kindly with Mrs. Garrigue, and at fifty she might have passed for an elder sister of Mrs. Levering.

If she had any suspicion that their reverse of fortune had anything to do with Mr. Dubreuil’s call she made no sign, but welcomed him as composedly as usual. After the weather and news of the day had been



discussed, a short silence prevailed. Mrs. Garrigue was wondering what brought him that particular morning, and Mr. Dubreuil was thinking how much easier business could be transacted if people could only know other people's thoughts. How easily, for instance, his errand at this time could be accomplished if he only knew in what form the proposition he was about to make to her would be most acceptable, if indeed it could be so in any form.

"I passed that fine brownstone mansion, my dear madam, in my drive this morning," said Mr. Dubreuil, breaking the silence; "I allude to the one purchased by your late lamented son-in-law. The thought arose in my mind, what a splendid boarding-house it would make, so central, yet so retired. I wonder no one ever thought of it before."

Mrs. Garrigue acquiesced, and Mr. Dubreuil continued:

"A first-class establishment of that kind is needed in this neighborhood. Now suppose, my dear madam,—just for example,—that a lady of your position and appearance would take that mansion and open a boarding-house, what would be the result? Why, my dear madam, it would raise boarding-house-keeping to a fine art, it would indeed. It would make manifest the hidden possibilities which have been lying dormant, waiting for a master-hand to call them forth. And, furthermore, I have often thought it a pity that competency should be bestowed upon those having energy and talent, thus depriving them of the incentive for the exercise of their gift to its fullest capacity; and, pardon



me, but I cannot help feeling gratified when a reverse of fortune gives such gifted ones an opportunity to exercise their talents, thus conferring a favor upon mankind."

The best of all was, this little lawyer believed every word he was saying, which was not exactly in the line of his business, and if he had not been successful in the experiment might have attributed his failure to that cause; but he was gratified to see that his auditor was not offended, but was apparently interested.

"Mr. Dubreuil, you generally have a motive for your actions and a reason for your opinions. I have been endeavoring to discover your object in saying what you have just said. I think you have heard of our reverses, and have come to offer advice. Am I right?"

Mr. Dubreuil was himself at once.

"It has always been a maxim of my life, my dear madam, that nothing is so bad but what it might be worse. I hope you look at the miscalculations of life in the same light, my dear Mrs. Garrigue."

"What do you advise us to do, Mr. Dubreuil?"

"Put this house in my hands for sale. The brown-stone mansion was bought so low that I am in hopes, with a little assistance from a friend of mine who has a little money to lend, you and your daughter can hold it. Open it as a boarding-house, take your daughter and her two little girls with you, and let the boy go to his grandmother in the country."

"But will Mr. Levering be willing?" inquired Mrs. Garrigue, a flush rising to her cheek and a light in her



eye which Lawyer Dubreuil, with all his adroitness in reading human nature, could not interpret. "I have heard of such a thing as grandparents even being intolerant to children and their noise."

"Oh, I will answer for Archibald; ten chances to one if the boy makes any impression on his sense of vision after a day or so. He spends most of his time in his mill, and the women-folks run the house. Miss Hesba would be my bugbear were I Archibald junior. Whew! she would save vinegar by turning cucumbers to pickles on the vines by merely looking at them."

"You make me quite anxious to see her, Mr. Dubreuil," said Mrs. Garrigue, smiling at the grimace of the little man.

"I hope you can counteract the acidity, my dear madam," replied Mr. Dubreuil, who, being in excellent spirits at the favorable reception which Mrs. Garrigue had given his advice, must have his little joke; "but I cannot say that I am anxious to repeat the experiment."

"But," continued the lady, coming back with a sigh to the question they had been discussing, "supposing we do as you advise, would we not, think you, have difficulty in getting the class of people that we would be willing to have about us? Remember this is an entirely new thing to us."

"Keep a first-rate house, my dear madam, and charge a first-rate price. People expect good board no matter how little they pay, and generally the grumblers are those who pay the least. I have been boarding the best part of my life, and can give you a few little



hints from time to time, if agreeable to you to receive them."

"Thank you! we would consider it a great kindness. Perhaps you could go a step further, and if you have no particular interest in your boarding-house, would take an apartment in the brownstone house. It would be a good commencement for us."

The little lawyer rubbed his small white hands gleefully. "Did I not say that you possessed the attributes of a first-rate business woman? It has always been a maxim of mine that straws show which way the wind blows. I was hoping you would seize the opportunity to get a boarder, and thought, if it did not occur to you, that I would mention it myself."

Mrs. Garrigue was pleased with the compliment.

"The house where I am now, or at least the people in it," corrected Mr. Dubreuil, "are about going farther up-town, which would be too great a distance from my office. I also know several other business men who wish to make a change on that account. A young married couple are inquiring for a nice boarding-place, and I shall certainly mention yours. And now, my dear Mrs. Garrigue, I must do what Satan has never done with any of us yet, I must leave you. Good-morning, my dear madam, good-morning!"



## CHAPTER VIII.

## A DAUGHTER'S RETURN.

“Oh, that weary homeward journey !  
Oh, those wheels, how their clatter jarred !  
For a cloud was over her sunshine,  
And life's sweet harmony marred.”

PREPARATIONS for some expected event were going on in a quiet way in the comfortable farm-house of Archibald Levering. A tea-table set for five persons, upon which was one of Aunt Hesba's excellent pound-cakes, a pair of fine chickens simmering in the oven, and a roaring fire on the hearth of the seldom-used parlor, gave hint and token that company was expected to tea.

That company was Caroline, only daughter of the house, returning from a four years' sojourn in the family of her uncle, Dr. Harkness, in St. Louis, and Archie, son of her only brother David, for whom her father had gone to the city, and whose arrival, as was Caroline's, might be looked for at any moment.

“She's come !” said Aunt Hesba, as the sound of wheels stopping at the gate, followed by the thud of a trunk on the porch, reached her ear, and mother and aunt hastened to greet the young girl.

Caroline had improved wonderfully in the four years of her absence from home. Always pretty, she had



developed into a beautiful and distinguished-looking young lady. Tall for her age when she left home, awkward in her movements and brusque in manner, she had returned graceful and ladylike in her appearance, and, when she chose, with the manners of the most refined of the society in which she had moved, and that society was of the very best in St. Louis.

She had been notified of her brother David's illness and death; the mother's heart yearned for her daughter, so Mercy had written for her to come home, and home she came. After the greetings were over, Caroline stationed herself at a window which commanded a view of the lane, with its row on either side of weeping-willows, to watch for the carriage containing her father and Archie. Knowing this, one would suppose a smile of joyful recognition would illumine her lovely, regular features, and brighten her clear hazel eye, when those for whom she had been watching came in sight. Any one indulging this amiable supposition would only have to glance at the fair, rosebud face to have that same amiable supposition cast to the winds.

"There comes father with those abominable old blue clothes that he has worn ever since I can remember. Mother, why do you let him make such a scarecrow of himself when he is able to have a better suit?"

Mrs. Levering looked up in surprise.

"Why, Caroline, I think they look very well; there is not a thin place in them. You would not want your father to be dressed up like a young man, would you?"

"Certainly not. But you never see anybody dressed like father, even at his age. No one even around here



dresses as he does, do they? And then, that carriage! I wonder the street boys do not shout after it when he goes into town. I would not be seen in it for the world."

"It has been a faithful good carriage, Caroline; no such work is made in these days, I have often heard your father say."

"No, I should think not; it would be a pity if there were."

"What ails it, Caroline?"

"Oh, mother, how can you ask?" replied her daughter, half crying. "It appears to me everything looks forlorn. I would not think it possible that things could run down so in four years."

A look of pain crossed Mrs. Levering's patient face.

"Why, Caroline, I thought you would be so glad to get back, after being away so long. I am sure I thought you would want to hear of poor David, and so many things. What is it that has run down so?"

"Oh, the house, and the furniture, and everything! No paper on the walls, no paint on the wood-work, nothing but rag carpet on the floors. You ought to see uncle's house in St. Louis: elegant carpets and curtains, and piano and pictures and books; and every place we visited was just like it. Oh, I should be mortified to death if anybody should visit me from there!"

"Why, you do not think that any one would come away here just to see you, Caroline, do you?" said Mrs. Levering, without a suspicion that her inquiry was not particularly complimentary.



Caroline was saved the embarrassment of framing a reply to suit the exigency, for just then the door opened, and her father and Archie came in.

At heart Archibald Levering was glad to see his daughter. As little as he chose to be in her society, or the society of any of his family, it was doubtful if any member of the home circle had missed her more than he, or felt the disappointment he felt in knowing that she preferred her uncle's home to his; but with his habit of concealing his feelings no one was aware of it. Even now, his cold blue eye never lighted, nor did his grim lips relax into a smile, as he came forward to greet her in a constrained manner, as though wishing it were over and done with.

As for Caroline, she put her dainty hand in that of her father with scarcely more warmth than though he were a stranger, then turned to greet Archie.

"They did not kiss each other," thought Archie, full of wonder, "and he is her father!"

The boy's surprise would have been great indeed if he had known that to kiss one of his children was something that Archibald Levering had never done in his life; therefore Caroline had grown up without expecting it, and would have been more surprised at this mark of paternal affection than Archie was at the omission.

Caroline's cheek flushed warmly at sight of her nephew. One glance satisfied her cultivated eye that her sister-in-law understood the art of dressing children tastefully. Here, at least, was a little bit of the world of society she had so unwillingly left, and for which



she was grieving before she had spent one night under the homestead roof. She felt companionship with the boy, and, truth to say, he looked as out of place in the low-joisted dining-room of the farm-house as did Caroline herself.

Archie thought he had never tasted such bread and butter in his life as that upon his grandfather's table; and full justice he did to it after his unaccustomed fast and drive in the sweet, pure air. Neither did he slight the excellent coffee, the honey, the sweet, tender ham, nor anything else which graced the board, which never at any time showed deficiency in quantity or quality. He longed to ask if the flour of which the splendid bread was made was ground in his grandfather's mill; but as the supper was partaken of in almost absolute silence, which he had not courage to break, the question remained unasked. Mr. Levering had asked his daughter after the welfare of her uncle's family; she had replied, and there appeared nothing more to be said.

As soon as the meal was finished, Mr. Levering donned his coat, which he had taken off before sitting down to supper, and went to the mill. Hesba took two glittering tin buckets from the picket-fence which enclosed the garden, and went to the barn to milk; Archie having seen the sleek and gentle-looking cows coming slowly, cropping as they came, up the lane on their way to their resting-place for the night.

Caroline took her station again at the window and looked disconsolately out, while Archie took a seat in his grandmother's cushioned rocking-chair by the open fire, which blazed and crackled up the wide-throated



chimney, casting grotesque shadows on the bare, white-washed walls, which but for it would have been darkened by the early twilight of the short autumn day.

Twinges of homesickness began to visit the boy. He missed the baby and the merry romps with his little sister by the light of the nursery fire; and oh! most of all, he missed his mother. His grandmother, who was quietly putting aside the remains of the meal, noticed the sadness creeping over him and the tears which were filling his eyes.

"Would you like to go out, dear, and see Aunt Hesba and the cows?" said she, going to him and patting him lovingly on the shoulder. "Just go quietly to the bars, and be careful not to frighten the cows, or Aunt Hesba will not like it."

Archie arose immediately, and, putting on his cap, left the room. The moment he was outside he heard the deep rumbling of the mill, which seemed to add to the dreariness. When in after-years the hum and whir of that machinery—his machinery—was the sweetest music to his ear, he often contrasted it with the sound which oppressed him the first evening he spent in the country.

Tears blinded his eyes as he trudged along down the lane that led to the barn. All around seemed so quiet and sad. He missed the hurry and bustle of the city streets, as viewed from the windows of his home; the lamplighter on his rounds, the shouts of the newsboys, the merry tinkle of the milkmen's bells,—all the sounds peculiar to the city alone. He felt that he really could not stay; he must go back and share his mother's lot,



no matter what that lot might be. He walked almost around the barn, but found no cows, when, in turning a corner of it, he came to an enclosure under the south side; there they were, sleepily chewing their cud, Aunt Hesba on her milking-stool in their midst.

Nothing was further from Archie's thoughts than to frighten anything. He only intended to lean on the only bar that was up, and watch Aunt Hesba as she rapidly added to the foaming pail, when crash! down came the bar and Archie on top of it, which caused a stampede among the cattle, in which Hesba, the milk, and the milking-stool were overthrown.

"Just as I expected!" she angrily exclaimed, as she picked herself up. "What possessed you to come sneaking down here and then make such a noise as that?"

"I did not intend to make a noise, Aunt Hesba," said Archie, too frightened to cry; "I just leaned on the stick and it came down, and I hurt myself, too."

"Stick! what stick?" said Aunt Hesba, sharply, looking around. "That is what people of sense call a bar." And picking up her empty buckets, she turned her back on poor Archie and went to the house.

Archie soon followed, his tears flowing without restraint, and heard the history of his misdeeds recounted in no flattering terms. His grandmother made no remark; she soothed and petted him, bathed his bruised elbows and knees with camphor, and soon the poor boy's troubles were forgotten in the sweet, deep sleep of childhood, his flushed cheek resting on his grandmother's lap.



Few persons, judging by the glimpse they have had of Caroline Levering's nature, would suppose that she had been for the past two years a Sunday-school teacher and a member of a church choir; yet such was the case, and to all appearances both duties had been performed satisfactorily to everybody concerned. Her uncle, Dr. John Harkness, and his family were active church members, but they were also gay, fashionable people; and brilliant parties and church fairs, fancy balls and donation-parties, prayer-meetings and evenings at the theatre, followed one another with delightful celerity, each in its turn receiving full share of attention with exemplary impartiality.

Dr. Harkness was Mercy Levering's only brother, as was Mercy his only sister; and as he had spent the small legacy left him by an uncle in obtaining his medical education, he concluded that the wisest thing he could do was to marry money, so laid his plans accordingly. He met with a young lady of St. Louis at a watering-place, who, besides being sensible and amiable, was an heiress. He married her, and established himself in her native city. Having but one daughter, they were more than pleased to have a bright, pretty girl like Caroline to be company for her in her studies, and then enter society with her.

So Dr. Harkness had, four years before, paid a visit to his sister Mercy, and had easily persuaded her to let Caroline, who was delighted to go, accompany him on his return to St. Louis. The four years had flown like a happy dream, and she was now at home. Caroline felt the change; yet, if there had been any sincere



desire in her heart to do good, what a field of usefulness lay before her in her home and in the neighborhood around her!

What an educator she might have been for Archie! what a comfort to the lonely mother pining for the society of her only daughter! what a cheerful companion for the sour-visaged and at times irritable Aunt Hesba, and for the reticent but kind-hearted father!

It was one of the contradictions of Archibald Levering's nature to feel satisfaction in having cheerful conversation going on around him, although he apparently paid no attention, and did not wish to be expected to take part. His wonted place of evenings was the old-fashioned settee behind the ten-plate stove in the sitting-room. There, with coat off,—for he never wore one in the house,—and with a lamp to himself, he read the whole evening, and sometimes far into the night, hours after the rest of the family had retired.

To Caroline these evenings were almost torture. The click of her mother's and aunt's knitting-needles rasped her sensitive nerves. She was weary from reading so much through the day, and took no interest in the employments going on around her. Her father and mother appeared oblivious to all this disquietude, but Aunt Hesba found herself losing patience.

"If you would do more, Caroline, you would be better contented," she said sharply to her one day. "Your cousins Mira and Prudence are always contented, because they are busy. Why don't you go over and see them?"

"What company are they for me?" replied the young girl, pettishly. "They know nothing but



drudgery, and all I should hear from Prudence would be how much butter the dappled cow had made, and Mira would be in ecstasies over the achievements of her speckled hens. Oh, how I hate the whole thing!"

"Look out, or Mira will outshine you with all your style," said Hesba, grimly. "I saw people turn to look at her the last time there was preaching at Dorton. She is growing up a sweet, lovely girl."

"She is welcome to all the admiration she will win about here; it would not count much to me," replied her niece, tartly.

With the knowledge gained of Sunday-schools in St. Louis, how easily Caroline could have organized one in the little church at Dorton, about a mile across-lots from her father's house, collected the youth of the neighborhood, who, for lack of something of the kind, spent their Sundays in fishing in the creek and boating in summer, gathering nuts in the autumn, and skating in winter. Neither would she have been at a loss for a coadjutor, for, cross-grained as Aunt Hesba was at times, she was faithful in the performance of any known duty, and no weather was too cold or too hot to keep her from the services of the little church when they were fortunate enough to secure a preacher.

But Caroline was young and undisciplined, and there was no friend at hand to point out the uncongenial path of duty, which natural affection and a sincere desire to do right might perhaps in time have made almost pleasant. So she fretted and beat against the bars of what she looked upon as her prison-house, like any other caged bird.



## CHAPTER IX.

## MARK BRYOR AND HIS FIRST AND ONLY LOVE.

“ Life hath its faithless days ;  
The golden promise of the morn  
That seemed for light and gladness born,  
Meant only noontide wreck and scorn,  
Hushed harp, instead of praise.”

IF there was any person in the whole circle of their acquaintance who was entitled to sympathy and commiseration, that person was Miss Bowlsly ; so thought her friends, and so she herself thought, and what was to be done about it, was more than she or any of her friends could cipher out.

Owing to a fall upon the ice she had been confined to her room, and most of the time to her couch, for several years, and had come to depend almost entirely upon an efficient woman, Margaret Hogan by name, who had lived with her a long time, even before her accident, and was nurse, protector, and friend ; and now Margaret was about to get married and leave her, and oh, dear ! was ever a poor afflicted mortal tried as was Miss Bowlsly ?

She had always known that Margaret had a lover in the old country, had even been entertained with scraps of the correspondence between them, and amid an avalanche of loving expressions had sifted out that he had



a mother, aged and nearly blind ; and nothing but his duty and affection for her kept him from his "darlint Marget;" but she had so many present afflictions to occupy her mind that she had no chance to acquire the habit of reaching into the future for things to worry about, so looked upon Margaret's marriage in about the same light that she did the millennium or any other probable but far distant event. Therefore one fine October morning, when she heard Margaret—proverbially demure in manner and measured in gait—fly up-stairs like a girl of sixteen, and with her round face rosy with joy cry out, "Miss Bowlsly, darlint, Dennis has comed!" she was so unprepared for the emergency as for the moment to forget self, and actually rejoiced with her.

Miss Bowlsly had long considered herself as one of fortune's footballs. In fact, she had good reason to suspect that the capricious dame looked upon her as an excellent subject upon which to try experiments. So numerous had been her misfortunes and disappointments, her perplexities and trials, that if a streak of good fortune had made a feint of calling upon her, she would in all probability have bade it, as an alien and stranger, pass by on the other side.

As far as her own knowledge went, she had always been an orphan. It was the supposition at the foundling hospital, where her first years were spent, that she had parents; but who they were or what they were, they never troubled themselves to find out. Therefore when a childless couple, Mr. and Mrs. Bowlsly, attracted by the forlorn look of the little



waif, offered to adopt her and take her to their home near the village of Dorton, the objections were so small as to have no weight; so they took the little creature to their comfortable farm-house, gave her their name, and brought her up precisely, she never doubted, as though she had been theirs by birth, as she was by affection.

There was a youth, a distant relative of Mrs. Bowlsly, who was a fellow-student with Mark and Richard Bryor at the Dorton Academy. With her characteristic, kind-hearted thoughtfulness, Mrs. Bowlsly frequently invited him to spend the Sabbath at the farm-house, and to bring any friend he chose to bear him company. The invitation was gladly accepted both by him and by Mark Bryor, his particular friend and classmate.

After Mark left the academy he frequently drove out from the city to visit the Bowsllys, and when Miss Bowlsly grew to womanhood he asked her to be his wife. The day was set for the marriage, but before it arrived his parents discovered that she was only an adopted daughter, and even the fine farm which it was generally understood she was one day to possess could not reconcile them to the union of their son with the daughter of "the dear knows who," as they expressed it; so they set to work to break off the match, and, what was more, succeeded, to the great grief of her foster-parents and also of the young lady, who remained, in consequence, "Miss Bowlsly" to the end of her days.

In the course of time Mr. and Mrs. Bowlsly died



unexpectedly, and within a short time of each other, and to the shock of this sudden bereavement was added that of losing the only real home she had ever known; for, owing to some discrepancy in the law or the lawyers, the valuable property, which had been willed to her, took a tangent movement to a wealthy nephew of Mr. Bowlsly, who considered that he had done a most generous act when he handed the desolate woman a few hundred dollars, in lieu of the handsome property she had always been led to believe was hers.

Sick at heart, she cast about for ways and means to prolong an existence which in her present depressed condition she scarcely considered worth the trouble. Persons of a numerical and statistical turn of mind may possibly remember how many accomplishments a celebrated French authoress possessed, whereby she could have earned her livelihood had necessity demanded; but being satisfied in our own mind that if it had really come to the trial she would have found herself mightily mistaken, we have never considered the number worth remembering. Miss Bowlsly, instead of counting upon her fingers the many occupations suffering for her acceptance, and floundering in the "delicious perplexity" of trying to decide where all were so congenial to her tastes and for which she was so competent, sat hopelessly down, and wondered, in the utter abandonment of despair, what on earth she was good for, or why she was ever born, since in the whole world there seemed no place for her.

Miss Bowlsly had never in her palmiest days possessed that inestimable blessing, a cheerful disposition.



She could not let the dead past bury its dead, but what time was not spent in brooding over present troubles was poorly invested in gloomy retrospection. Instead of encouraging the waters of oblivion to roll over the troubles of the past and bury them deep, seeing that keeping their memory green could not benefit herself or others, she fostered and watched over them as tenderly as a mother over her sightless and misshapen offspring; therefore, to the last day of her life, she never forgot the bitter sorrow of that dreary autumn afternoon when she bade farewell to the home which was never more to be hers.

There had been a sale of the personal property the day before, and the trampled flower-beds and prints of careless footsteps on the neatly-kept lawn were dreary reminders of one exciting and worrying day already in the past. Alone, and for the last time, she opened the door of every empty and echoing room, stood gazing vacantly out of some particular window where old recollections and associations of those who were gone were most poignant; stood in the closet which had been her play-house in childhood and the receptacle of her little treasures in later years, then slowly descended the stairs, empty to other vision, but, to her, thronging with vignettes of a happy home life.

Locking the outer door and putting the key in her pocket, she drew her black shawl around her shivering form and sat down on the porch-step, too wretched for tears. The autumn winds sighed through the nearly leafless trees, scattering the gleanings of the harvest on the gravel walk at her feet; then on through the garden,



rustling the blighted stalks of the dahlias and hollyhocks, which a few weeks before had been the pride of her foster-mother's heart; on through the rich meadowlands and corn-fields, every foot of which had been trodden by the patient form at rest in the grave; then spending its wasting strength in the woodland far beyond, where it sighed a requiem over her buried hopes.

The gathering twilight warned her that it was time to depart, and, rising wearily, she passed through the wicket-gate, and, without looking back, took her way to Dorton.

Among the few friendships which her reserved or, as most persons considered, haughty disposition had allowed her to cultivate was an old schoolmate, who had married many years before, and having other cares and interests incident to married life to engross her time and attention, her companionship with Miss Bowlsly had not been so free and unrestrained as in her girlhood; but in the hour of adversity she most cordially offered the stricken girl a home until she could look about her and decide upon her future, and it was there she purposed going that evening.

On her way thither she passed a millinery and notion store, kept by a maiden lady, and, as is generally the case, the little place was the resort of what few young people were in the village.

Miss Bowlsly's mourning-bonnet had been purchased there by a helpful neighbor, with the understanding that Miss Bowlsly was to call to settle for it when convenient, which she had thought should be the following day. A sudden impulse seized her to call then,



and, retracing her steps, she entered the dim little store,—dim because for the time the brightness and cheeriness were in the parlor back of it, where the rosy milliner and two little girls— orphan nieces, who had been bequeathed to her by their dying mother—were merrily sorting a box of scraps of ribbon for trimmings for the dolls' hats in process of construction.

A glimpse through the open door of the tiny kitchen showed her another orphan to which this good woman had given a home, and who was now preparing tea for the little family ; then a kind voice greeted her.

"Come right out here to the fire, my dear Miss Bowlsly. Mrs. Baker was in a while ago, and said she expected you, and I was just thinking how cold and dreary it was for you down at the empty house."

Children instinctively know when one is in trouble and in need of comfort, and Miss Bowlsly had taken a seat among them but a short time when a small soft hand was slipped into hers on either side, and loving, childish eyes were regarding her with affectionate sympathy. Down deep in Miss Bowlsly's heart lay a true affection for children, although her knowledge of their ways was limited. That one should, of its own will, show her any mark of affection, struck her with surprise. The mother-love in all its purity and self-abnegation was strong in her, but never having had the opportunity to develop, she was scarcely conscious that she possessed it ; she only knew now that she was more comforted by their silent caresses than by any spoken word since her bereavement.

"You are a happy woman, Miss Steever," said she,



earnestly. "No wonder you are so cheerful and contented; you have everything to make you so."

"Yes; but did you ever know a thoroughly satisfied or really contented person, Miss Bowlsly? I can truly say I never did, and I am no exception to the rule. Just at this time I am so unsettled I do not know which way to turn."

Seeing that Miss Bowlsly was regarding her with attentive interest, she continued: "My business here is increasing, but I believe I could do better in a larger place. The city is so near that all those who keep carriages—and most of the farmers around do—go to the city for their millinery. Just at this time there is an excellent opening in the city: an old friend is about to give up the business, and if I had a few hundred dollars more, or a few less," she added, with a laugh, "I could come to a decision."

"If I understood the business, and would advance the few hundreds you mention, would you allow me to go with you?"

"I most certainly would," replied Miss Steever, cordially, "and that is why I resolved to mention it to you; but not knowing how you would take it, did not tell you my wishes just at first. I believe you have a natural talent for such work, and it would not take you long to learn; you could do the selling, and learn the millinery at odd times if you preferred."

So it was settled; and the next day Miss Bowlsly entered upon a new and entirely different phase of life from any she had experienced. And it was beneficial to her in many ways; it drew her out of herself, gave



her more interests in life, more knowledge of human nature, less time to reflect on her losses and disappointments.

They went to the city, and established themselves in one of the best localities of a business street. Wishing to be patronized by people, they went where the people were, and the result proved that Miss Steever's reasoning was correct. This might not have been the natural sequence with all persons at all times and under all circumstances; in many cases the change might have been anything but favorable, the risk too great, the returns too slow; but Miss Steever was one with whom everything prospered, and Miss Bowlsly, because associated with her, shared the prosperity.

It was about this time that Margaret Hogan came to live with them, to manage the household affairs; and well managed they were. A few years afterward, Miss Steever withdrew, to enter a matrimonial partnership, and the two nieces and the orphan girl accompanied her to her new home, leaving Miss Bowlsly and Margaret Hogan sole representatives of the business and domestic firm.

Notwithstanding her withdrawal from the business, it prospered beyond Miss Bowlsly's expectations, and she was fast becoming a rich woman; then came the unlucky fall upon the ice, and in consequence the giving up of her business and removal to a retired part of the city, where she existed for years, with apparently nothing more to interest her than the occasional change from one physician to another, interspersed with all



the patent medicines she could hear of which made a specialty of her case.

It was at this time that old Mr. Bryor died, and Mark returned from Europe. The years of his absence had sprinkled his hair with silver, and converted his always reserved manner into one almost austere. Italy's sun had bronzed his yet handsome face, the passing years had attenuated his once robust form. He left his home saddened and disappointed, he returned world-weary and more silent than ever. His native city appeared to have no attractions for him. If it could be truly said that Mark Bryor had been happy anywhere on earth, that place was Dorton; so as soon as the business for which he had returned was looked into, he went out there.

He had never heard one word from Miss Bowlsly since he left his own land, and never doubted but she had married years before. His sorrow was sincere when told at the farm-house which had once been her home, of the death of her foster-parents; but a ray of hope came into his heart when he heard that she was still unmarried. He returned immediately to the village, and after some delay and much inquiry obtained her address. Before sunset he was back in the city, and evening found him in her quiet parlor.

If Mark Bryor was proud, his pride could not be equalled by that of Miss Bowlsly. Her haughty spirit had received too keen a blow; she could not forget. All love for him was blotted out long ago, and she would not, afflicted as she was, be a burden to a man who had once deserted her. She reminded him that



the circumstances of her birth remained as when he left her, and in all probability would so remain. Her rejection of his second offer of marriage was short, sharp, and decisive.

Mark Bryor returned next day to Dorton, and drove straight on out to the Bowlsly farm, and in an hour from the time the subject was mentioned to the owner of it, Mr. Bryor had bargained, bought, and paid for it; the whole estate was in his possession, and the same evening he engaged Clement Pierson to farm it on shares.

A few weeks after the ripple which had disturbed the quiet life of Miss Bowlsly had subsided, Dennis, whose mother had died, came to claim his promised wife, and now Margaret was going to leave her, and poor Miss Bowlsly was in consequence anxious and depressed.

She had lived such a retired and, as she began to realize, selfish life that she did not know to whom to apply for information in regard to filling Margaret's place. The few friends she possessed were those in her old business neighborhood, and as she could not return their calls, the communication was not very frequent.

In country neighborhoods it is difficult to lead the life of a recluse, but in a populous city persons can, if they so will it, bury themselves as completely from companionship with their fellow-creatures as though they were residents of the desert of Sahara; and Miss Bowlsly had come near doing that very thing. Margaret and herself had been all in all to each other, and



now Margaret was going away ; and somehow this new perplexity set her to thinking. She was growing old ; what was to become of her if her old age was as helpless and solitary as it now gave promise of being ?

“ What good had she ever done in the world, and how much had it been benefited by her living in it ? ” she questioned of herself, sadly. None that she could see.

Well, it was never too late to do better, and from this time forth she would try to benefit her fellow-pilgrims in any manner that lay in her power. But where to begin was the question.

In the prosperous and highly respectable neighborhood of which she was a resident everybody seemed abundantly able to get along without any assistance from her ; at least, no one had come to her for aid and comfort, and she was too much occupied with her own afflictions to take a very active interest in those of others, so had never made inquiry. The sweet words of dear Alice Carey might have found an echo in her sad heart :

“ With all things to take of thy dear loving kindness,  
The wine of thy sunshine, the dew of thy air,  
And nothing to give but the folly and blindness  
Born of the depths of an utter despair.

“ The little green grasshopper, weak as we deem her,  
Sings day in and day out for the dear right to live,  
And canst thou, oh Summer ! make room for a dreamer,  
With all things to take and with nothing to give ? ”

With the families on either side of her she had not even



a speaking acquaintance. She had, when assisted by her faithful Margaret to her chair by the window, which commanded a view of the back-yards of their dwellings, taken an interest in watching the young people of the family next door, on the one side, as they flitted in and out among the roses and geraniums. They were all merry, and seemingly contented. The parents were dignified, middle-aged people, with prosperity written in every line of their countenances and fold of their garments. That family evidently required nothing at her hands.

On the other side there had been many changes since she had taken possession of her present residence. It was all used as a dwelling except the large room front, which had been successively a stationery store, a confectionery, a drug store, and the year before had been taken by a quiet German family, who had opened a grocery and provision store.

She remembered that, at the time, it was one of her trials: that boxes of soap, and brooms, and wooden buckets should line the sidewalk close to her dwelling; and the bow-window, which heretofore had been brilliant with colored liquids in handsome urns and a tank of gold-fish, or snowy with frosted bride's cake and rich bonbons, should have degenerated into a sample-holder of yeast-powder, pipes, and smoked herring. She had always sent to the large provision stores for everything they required, and she would not let the establishment of a smaller one even next-door prevent her doing so still, and faithfully she had kept her resolution.



She remembered also that the husband had died in the summer, and that the widow still kept the store, but whether she were doing well or ill she knew no more than if she were miles away.

Well, it should be so no longer; she would try to become acquainted with the widow and her family, and if they required any help or sympathy from her, it should not be withheld.

Money, we believe, has always been credited as being the lever which moves the world; but, after all, it has a partner which goes hand in hand with it,—a very silent partner, by the way; very retiring and unobtrusive, but oftentimes having more capital in the concern than its burly and pompous co-worker. And that partner is self-interest. Only let a person get an inkling how a favor rendered another can benefit himself, and if he can compass it in any way, that favor is pretty sure to be conferred. And it is right that it should be so, if only to prove to us that we are dependent one upon another in our journey through the world. Therefore quickly following on the heels of her good resolution to help another came the equally good one to benefit herself if she could.

“Maybe she may know of some good, trusty woman to fill Margaret’s place,” was Miss Bowlsly’s thought.

When the honest little German woman next-door was informed by Margaret that “Miss Bowlsly would like to have her drop in if she could spare the time that evening, as she would like to talk to her,” quickly following her answer, “To be sure I will; thank her for the honor,” came the undeniably selfish but per-



fectly natural thought, "Maybe she will know of good recipe for curing dried beef."

Miss Bowlsly had just finished her simple evening repast when Mrs. Leibeg, knitting in hand, came briskly in,—a bright-eyed, rosy little woman, all smiles and good humor, brimming with life and vitality, her atmosphere of breezy, out-door wholesome life imparting more refreshment to Miss Bowlsly's languid existence than any cordial ever patented. The swift motion of her needles in and out as round after round was added to the fast lengthening stocking, the thread held in her left hand, German fashion, did not in the least interfere with the even flow of her discourse.

Upon the troubles she had passed through she dwelt but lightly, merely mentioning them in connection with what she was relating; and Miss Bowlsly almost forgot her own, and actually indulged in two or three hearty laughs, as her companion recounted amusing incidents in her funny, broken way.

After her husband's death had left her alone she had rented out the most of the dwelling-part of the house, retaining but two rooms and the store. As for the neighbors, she knew everybody around and liked them all. They all patronized her, and she attributed it in a great measure to the doctor's wife, who had called in to see her after her husband's death, and had ever since bought her groceries and other necessities from her, and her example was followed by her acquaintances, and now the best ladies in the neighborhood did not consider themselves demeaned by sitting in her store and chatting a while with her.



Miss Bowlsly did not wonder at it; she could not remember when she had passed so pleasant an evening, and Dennis and Margaret in the kitchen were not more oblivious of the flight of time than were Miss Bowlsly and her next-door neighbor. Mrs. Leibeg, who had a knack of combining business with pleasure, did not forget the recipe for dried beef, and Miss Bowlsly took pleasure in giving her adopted mother's superior method; and when it was ready for sale no dried beef in the city was in such demand as "Leibeg's country-cured beef," for it took its name from Mrs. Leibeg, although she never sold a pound of it, and this is the why and wherefore.

When the time drew near for Margaret's marriage, and consequently giving up of her old home, the more anxious she became to reside near Miss Bowlsly, and the more Dennis saw of the corner grocery the better it appeared to suit him, so he offered to buy out Mrs. Leibeg on such fair terms that she was glad to accept; and as the family in the other part of the house were going to leave, he and Margaret had no difficulty in renting the whole place from the owner; and when Miss Bowlsly asked Mrs. Leibeg and her knitting what they were going to do now, the reply was, "Come and live with you in Margaret's place, if you will have us." And they came.



## CHAPTER X.

## PRUDENCE AND MIRA.

“Ay! such is man’s philosophy,  
When one he tries to woo  
But scorns him,—see—it teaches him  
To make another do.”

ANOTHER summer night had detached itself from the Future, had for a brief period been the Present, and then become for evermore an atom of the Past, when Prudence Levering awoke with a start, and arose from her couch, already oppressed with the burdens of the new day.

There are hours in every one’s life when the most trivial of vexations take upon themselves the form of calamities, and this waking hour of Prudence Levering was just such an one.

It was a sultry morning in the beginning of July. Hay harvest had commenced, and her father, Jonas Levering, in consequence of her quick temper and sharp tongue, was short of a hand. To the mind unschooled in rural lore this might suggest the impression that Mr. Levering was deficient in one of the component parts of his anatomy, which contribute to the measure of one’s usefulness; but such was not the case. He was the owner of a pair of hands, as efficient, honest, and toil-worn could have been found anywhere, but, as was



remarked before, in consequence of the reproofs of his elder daughter, Prudence, the previous evening, Peter McCaffry, his boy-of-all-work, had shaken the dust from his feet and departed, leaving Mr. Levering short of a hand.

"I ought to have been up an hour ago," communed Prudence, as she hastily fastened hooks and inserted pins. "I know just how it will be when I get downstairs: father will have cut only enough wood to get breakfast, leaving us to pick around for the rest of the day; mother will be worried because Peter is not within call; grandmother will be pottering around in everybody's way, and if Mira happens to be up, she will look, 'I told you so,' even if she does not say it."

She descended.

"Well, thee is up at last," said Mira, glibly, as Prudence opened the kitchen-door. "I suppose thee forgot thee had to feed the calves, now that Peter is gone. I did the milking an hour ago, and am helping mother with the breakfast."

"Thee is very brisk," retorted Prudence, reddening; "but it is no wonder thee is elated. It is something new for thee to be up without my having to call thee several times." And taking her scalded meal she disappeared, without waiting for the reply she knew was sure to come.

It has been said that a good cup of coffee is just the mid-point between bodily and spiritual nourishment, acting agreeably and at the same time upon the thoughts and senses, and that the preparing of this excellent beverage is one of the most delicate and



interesting of culinary operations. The originator of that thought would have been confirmed in his opinion could he have seen Mira Levering as she gayly spun around the ample kitchen that warm morning. Fresh as a rose, arms bared to the elbow, and with a gay little dust-cap over her sunny braids, and her grandmother's wide apron pinned around her, she was a perfect picture of youth, health, and happiness.

"Mother, thee can take thy place at the table now, and tell grandmother that breakfast is ready. Prudence is coming, and I will blow the horn for father," she announced, cheerily, as the aroma of the bubbling coffee saluted her nostrils; "and a good breakfast it is, too. Dear me, who says I cannot fry potatoes, even if it is new to me?" she mimicked to herself, with a dash of mirthful irony.

A long and lusty blast upon the bright tin horn summoned her father, not from the distant barn as she had intended, but from the back porch, close at hand, where he had been for the last ten minutes, rather disconsolately viewing the field where the fragrant, newly-mown hay lay in the thick, even swaths made by the mower the day before. He returned the little bone comb to his vest-pocket, from whence it always emerged in seasons of perplexity like the present, and took his accustomed seat at the table.

"If the Pierson boys disappoint me," he remarked, breaking the silence which at his table always preceded a meal, "I don't know what will be done. I wish I had gone over to the village last evening to make sure of them, and let them know I was depending upon them."



“If they disappoint thee, father, I will go out and help thee rake the hay,” said Mira. “I would as lief do it as not.”

“Thee is a good child, Mira,” said her grandmother, a relieved smile crossing her wrinkled features. “Many a day I have raked hay, and was never the worse for it, either.”

“Thee will do nothing of the kind,” said Prudence, ignoring the old lady’s remark and turning sharply upon Mira. “The currants are ripe, and must be picked to-day for jelly; and as thee can neither do the baking or get the dinner or make the jelly, thee must pick the currants.”

“I cannot but wish that thee had restrained thy impatience with Peter; at least, until harvest was over, Prudence,” remarked her father at this juncture. “It would have been better for us all.”

Now, Prudence was perfectly aware of this herself, and in her inmost heart regretted her ill-timed petulance; but no one, to have heard her spirited reply, would have guessed her feeling upon the subject.

“If he shirked in the field as he did about the house, father, I should think thee would consider it a good riddance. I do not believe he would ever have cut a stick of wood of evenings for next day or dug a potato if I had not been at him all the time.”

“I will pick the currants for thee, Prudence,” said her mother, mildly. “If Mira can be of any help to father, thee should be willing to have her go.”

So that point was settled, as was generally the case, in Mira’s favor; and, putting on her gypsy sundown,



with rake in hand, and frisky as a young colt, Mira set out with her father to the field.

In the mean time, Grandmother Atheling had arisen from her chair and gone to her room, which was on a level with the dining-room, and opened into it. "Mira!" she called from the window, "Mira, child, come here; I want thee!"

Mira turned, and, dropping her rake, ran swiftly and lightly up the steps of the porch, stepped airily upon the porch bench, and with a skip and a bound dropped through the window into her grandmother's room.

"I want thee to put plantain-leaves in the crown of thy hat, to protect thee from the sun," said her grandmother, as Mira bestowed a kiss and a hug upon her which would have done credit to a young bear; "and put on these Nankin mittens; they will protect thy hands. I used to wear them years and years ago," she continued, as she proceeded hastily to draw an old green chest from under her curtained bed. "It will not detain thee a minute, child," as she noticed a little impatient shrug of her granddaughter's shoulders, "for I know exactly where they are."

The mittens were found and put on, and once more Mira skimmed through the window, flew down the steps, picked up her rake, and entered the field by the bars, just as the Pierson boys were coming over the fence on the opposite side.

"There are only two of them," soliloquized Mira, shading her eyes with her hand, "and father expected all three. I am glad, as one of them is missing, it



happens to be Clem, for if there is anybody I despise it is that Clem Pierson."

"Good-morning, Miss Mira," said a cheery voice; and, turning quickly, she encountered the roguish visage of the said Clem.

"I thought thee was not coming," said Mira, flushing. "Why did thee not come with the other boys, instead of sneaking along this way?"

"I came around by the village to get a new straw hat," said Clem, undauntedly; "I wanted it to match your gypsy."

"Well, thee can take thyself and thy new straw hat to the other side of the field," replied she, coldly; "as for me and my gypsy, we will stay here."

"I would rather stay on this side," said Clem, plaintively. "Why do you want to drive me away, Mira?"

"Because I came out to work and to help father, and not to waste time in talking," replied she, beginning to use her rake vigorously. "I suppose thee knows that Peter went off in a huff last night," she added, by way of explanation, "and left us to get the hay in as best we could."

"No, did he, though?" said Clem, encouraged by this sign of relenting. "Well, if that don't beat all!"

"Father would not have cared so much if he had waited until harvest was over, but it is just the way with them all," she added, sententiously; "we keep them through the winter to have them in the summer, and when summer comes they are gone."

"It is too bad!" said Clem, eying some fleecy



clouds overhead. "And the sun rose and went to bed again this morning, which is a sure sign it will rain before night."

Stimulated by this thought to new exertions, they both worked away diligently; and, becoming gradually separated, silence for a time reigned between them.

"Hollo! who are the boys calling to?" said Clem, as, in returning, he commenced helping Mira pile up a bunch of hay she had raked together. "A tramp, as I live!"

"Well, I declare!" replied his companion, gazing intently in the same direction; "it is a tramp, sure enough, and he is going to work; see, he has taken the rake from one of the boys, and they are going to the barn for the team to commence hauling in."

"And look how awkwardly he handles it," said Clem, contemptuously. "I don't believe the fellow ever saw one before."

"There will have to be more 'piece' sent out," remarked Mira, after a pause, and with the air of a veteran housekeeper; "the tramp will want some."

"I think there will have to be a 'piece' sent in pretty soon, or I am no judge; the sun is getting too much for you, ain't it, Mira?"

"Oh, Clem, I do believe it is!" said poor Mira, faintly. "Oh, I wish I was at the house!"

"Well, come right along, then, before you get any sicker," said Clem, dropping his rake and taking Mira's from her unresisting hand; and with her reluctant arm in that of the despised Clem the twain took the shortest way to the house, Clem fanning her with the new straw hat as they walked along.



Once in the house Mira made a straight path for her grandmother's room, and with a sigh of relief sank upon the old chintz-covered lounge by the open window, which ever since she could remember had been her comfortable resting-place in every ailment, as was her grandmother her balm for every woe.

The love between Grandmother Atheling and Mira was exceedingly sweet and strong, and yet Grandmother Atheling was not connected to Jonas Levering or his family by one tie of blood. She was Mrs. Levering's step-mother, had married her father when both were long past middle life, and having no near relative in the world (if we may except a brother, who left his home in early manhood, had not been heard from for years, and was given up as dead), she had come when Mira was an infant and Prudence but three years old to make her home with them.

Mrs. Levering had always been delicate; so the little Mira became her grandmother's especial care. Mrs. Atheling was a member of the Society of Friends, and the family gradually grew into using the plain language, although all but herself attended the little church at Dorton. Mira shared her grandmother's room, and the figures of gay chariots and helmeted horsemen on the old-time bed-curtains had been among the first objects that attracted her childish notice. The corner cupboard was a Pandora's box of inexhaustible treats and sweet surprises to gratify her childish tastes, while the faint odor of dried rose-leaves which permeated her grandmother's room was to Mira the sweetest perfume in the world.



Although the two brothers, Archibald and Jonas Levering, lived near each other, and the families were on excellent terms, there was not as much intimacy as one might suppose. Archibald was not social in his nature, and Jonas was always busy, and generally sent the boy when anything was required from the mill, so the brothers seldom met. As for Caroline, the society of her cousins had few charms for her. Mira was too young in years and Prudence too old in her ways to suit her, and lonely and discontented as she was after her return from St. Louis, her visits to her uncle's house were few.

After seeing Mira safe and in good hands, Clem Pierson turned from the door and proceeded to the pump-shed, where he refreshed himself with a cool drink and laved his face and hands, while Prudence prepared the lunch for his expectant comrades in the field.

"There's a tramp out there," he remarked, as Prudence quartered pies and cut wedges of home-made cheese. "He is as hard at work as any of us, and will want twice as much to eat, I expect. Better put in Miss Mira's share extra for him."

"A tramp!" exclaimed Prudence, turning a horror-stricken face toward her informant. "What on earth possessed father? Does he want us all killed in our beds?"

"Your father did not know anything about it," said Clem. "One of the boys called him and set him to work. A lean, lank-looking fellow," he continued, viewing his own muscular proportions with compla-



cency. "Nobody need be afraid of him. I don't believe he is used to work either, and I saw him take a ring from his finger and slip it in his pocket."

"Oh, I expect he is a burglar or something," thought Prudence to herself. "I have felt all day that some evil would happen."

"Hollo!" exclaimed Clem, as he started for the field with his basket and a jug of new milk. "Here comes one of the boys leading the tramp, and, by all that's jolly, he's sick, too."

Prudence opened her lips to speak, but it ended with a groan.

"Lay him on the porch-bench," said Clem, "while I slap some cold water in his face."

"Suppose he should get very ill and maybe die here, what upon earth would we do?" thought Prudence. "Oh, I wish I had not said so much to Peter!"

Grandmother Atheling was in her element now with two invalids on her hands, and even Prudence took heart and her courage revived when, instead of the weather-beaten, villainous-looking scamp she expected to see, a handsome-featured, noble-countenanced youth claimed for a short time her compassion. But the second invalid was not so tractable as the first, perhaps because he had not the comforts of the figured curtains and rose-scented room. At all events, after reclining for a little while and feeling revived, he resolved to try the field again, and rising slowly, he prepared to look about him. At the same time Mira, who after so much bustle outside had noticed that all was still, concluded to rise and look about her also,



and the consequence was that the two harvesters had a momentary glimpse of each other, in which the tramp, looking in Mira's eyes, bashfully noticed that they were of heaven's own blue, while Mira blushing averted hers from the honest hazel eyes of her compatriot on the other side of the window.

Three separate times did that indefatigable tramp take his place in the harvest-field that July day, and three separate times had he to resign and seek shelter from the sun, although after the first time he refused to return to the porch, but laid himself under the apple-tree, with his bundle for a pillow.

"Thee works too hard when thee is at it," said good Jonas Levering, when the tramp was compelled to beat a retreat for the third time. "Thee should take thy time and not waste more of thy strength than is necessary."

While the phenomenon, as we are constrained to designate a tramp to whom such advice could be addressed, was recruiting for the fourth time, the Pierson boys were comfortably taking their five o'clock supper in the vine-covered porch. The hay, with the exception of one load, was all safely housed, and that load was already at the barn-door; and although a storm was threatening and the western sky already darkening, they ate and chattered unconcernedly, knowing that all would be finished in time.

"Thee can keep some supper for him, Prudence," said Jonas as he arose from the table, glancing through the window at the prostrate form under the apple-tree. "Perhaps he can eat something when it gets cooler;



he has eaten nothing to-day, and has worked as hard as he was able."

"And what about his lodging, father? Thee certainly does not intend to ask him to stay all night. Thee will just pay him and let him go."

"If he is like the most of them, he will ask me to let him stay, instead of waiting to be invited; but thee certainly knows me better than to suppose I would turn a fellow-creature away in a storm."

The last of the hay was stored, the evening work satisfactorily done, and the Pierson boys had taken their departure, when a thunder-storm which shook the farm-house to its foundations conquered and held the whole family, tramp included, spellbound and appalled in Grandmother Atheling's room, where Mira, timid by nature and rendered more so by the experiences of the day, crouched on the floor, with her head on her grandmother's breast and the protecting arms of the old lady wrapped around her darling.

At first a few big drops fell from the surcharged clouds, then sheets of rain swept the porches, the wind careened madly over the chimneys and tree-tops, and each blinding flash of lightning was instantly followed by a resounding clap of thunder.

"Thee is not timid!" remarked Mrs. Levering to the tramp, as he and Mr. Levering made a move to view the state of affairs from the porch; for the storm had subsided, and all was silent save low growls of thunder far away.

"I used to be, ma'am, as timid as she," looking compassionately at Mira; "but my mother always talked



to us during a storm and kept us interested in counting between the flash of lightning and the report which followed, enabling us to compute the distance between us and the storm."

"Then thy mother is living?" said Prudence, surprised into interest, and with a relieved look on her somewhat fretful features; for somehow a mother was a commodity she had never thought of giving a tramp the credit of possessing.

"Oh, yes, miss, my father and mother are both living; he is a wholesale merchant in the city. We live on Lombard Street."

You see the boy had not for a moment supposed that they had mistaken him for a tramp, so he gave his bit of information as simply and unassumingly as he would have done to one of his father's country customers who had come to the city to lay in his season's stock.

An awkward pause followed. Mira arose and took a seat, while Prudence was mentally shifting his sleeping-place from Peter's room to the best spare chamber, when the boy, who instinctively felt that something more was expected of him, said,—

"I went to school very steadily, and the doctor said I studied too hard and was injuring my health, and advised father to let me come to the country for a while; and if I could get work on a farm, so much the better. Father is going to send me to college this winter."

"Our boy Peter, who helped about the place and in the field when necessary, left us yesterday," said Jonas, hesitatingly. "I suppose thee would not be willing to take his place, as thy father, no doubt, is a rich man?"



"But I am not," replied the boy, smilingly, and showing, as Prudence thought, the handsomest set of teeth she had ever seen. "I will take Peter's place as far as willingness goes. But I don't know much; you will have to teach me what to do."

"Had thee any place in view when thee set out?" questioned Mr. Levering.

"None at all. My trunk is at the inn, at Dorton, and I set out this morning with the intention of sending for it whenever I found a place where they were willing to put up with my awkwardness for my board. I am eighteen years old, and my name is Garnet Adriance."

Jonas and his new employ   adjourned to the porch.

"Have the ladies any objection to the smell of a cigar?" inquired Garnet as they took seats, selecting one from a silver cigar-case and offering the case to Mr. Levering.

"I really do not know," said Mr. Levering, declining the favor; and then, after a pause, which the young man improved by striking a match and igniting his cigar with a dexterity which showed practice, he added, "Does thy father approve of thy smoking?"

"Oh, yes, sir," replied Garnet; "he smokes himself. Why, you could scarcely see yourself up in our smoking-room of evenings when father entertains a party of his friends."

"No, it injures the eyes," said Jonas, reflectively; "and I hope after thee is with me awhile I will have convinced thee that it injures in every way."

In the mean time, Prudence and the rest of the house-



hold cabinet were discussing the new aspect of affairs in all its bearings. Now that the tramp question was laid aside, Prudence expressed her opinion that the guest-chamber, instead of Peter's room, was the proper place for the son of a wholesale merchant, while Mrs. Levering mildly but firmly took another view of the case.

"I am sure he does not wish or expect to be treated as a guest," she averred. "I would put him in Peter's room; it is clean and comfortable, and that is all he requires."

Mira said nothing, and Grandmother Atheling also held her peace, well knowing that to any advice she would give Prudence would turn a deaf ear and take the opposite course from any she proposed.

And so it came to pass that Garnet was domiciled under the roof of good Farmer Levering, and was not long in finding out that the surest way to Mira's favor was to pay respect to Grandmother Atheling, and that Prudence would not have been at all displeased could he have found it in his heart to slight the inoffensive old lady, who took all existence so kindly and placidly.

Garnet Adriance was not only naturally industrious, but he was a born genius, and the whole family were charmed with the variety of his attainments. He was here, there, and everywhere. He attended to the stock with unflagging interest; he split wood and dug potatoes for Prudence with praiseworthy fidelity and with an unction, as though they were the most pleasant pastimes in the world; he fixed broken latches and



rusty locks about the house and barn equal to a locksmith; he glazed windows; he made flower-racks for Mira; he yoked an unruly goose for Mrs. Levering, and put a new rivet in Grandmother Atheling's spectacles. He repaired a dilapidated gate and broke a colt to harness, and Mr. Levering reported him "as good a hand in the field as anybody need want, after he got used to the sun."

When the cool evenings set in and the little hickory fire burned clear and bright on the hearth in the open fireplace in grandmother's room, the claw-footed table, or "tea-tray," as grandmother called it, was drawn before the cheerful blaze, and Garnet taught Mira to play chess, or read aloud from some new and interesting book with which his family kept him supplied, or recounted the sayings and doings of the gay world which he had left, as he supposed, but for a short time. Grandmother Atheling sat by, knitting in hand, as happy as Mira herself, and was even beguiled occasionally into recounting incidents of her own youthful days, than which Garnet and Mira thought nothing could be pleasanter.

As for Garnet, he was happier than he had ever been in his life. The gay, pretty chatter of Mira, the joyous laugh, the glad, girlish movements of the lithe, graceful form, the shy, sweet embarrassment of her manner, the roguish dimples coquetting around the rosy lips, were the sweetest pleasures he had ever known. His letters to his home were filled with his new life, and the names of every one of Jonas Levering's family were as household words in the handsome dwelling on Lombard Street.



Prudence gave no sign of the heartaches which all this happiness gave her, but gravely, decorously, and matter-of-factly sat of evenings with her father and mother, crocheting endless patterns of edging and listening to the merry voices in the adjoining room. She had never honored that room with her society of evenings before Garnet came to live with them, and she knew that there was no one in the place dull-witted enough not to notice it if she made a change in favor of it now. The only relief to the monotony of her life was when Clem Pierson came in to spend a chance evening and to catch, if possible, a glimpse of Mira,—a hope which he cherished from time to time, but which was to him always a hope deferred, while to Garnet it was a living, sweet reality.

Winter came on, and although Garnet received letters regularly from his family and once or twice had paid a short visit to his home, nothing was said of his going to college, and he was too satisfied with the happy state of affairs at the farm to broach a subject that would take him from Mira. He noticed, moreover, that his father looked careworn and was not in his usual spirits, and had also hinted more than once of retrenchment in the family expenses, so Garnet flattered himself that he was doing a filial kindness to avoid harassing his father with the extra expense a collegiate course would entail.

Garnet was right. One of those convulsions which not unfrequently agitate business circles had been threatening for some time, and finally the crash came, involving the old-established house of Adriance in the



general ruin. Poor Mr. Adriance in his declining years was glad to accept a clerkship in the store of which he had been proprietor, and his family was compelled to move into smaller quarters in a less eligible neighborhood. Garnet remained at the farm, gradually becoming an excellent farmer under the judicious teaching of Jonas, who could not have borne to part with him, for, two years after the failure of Mr. Adriance, a sudden and unexpected trouble fell upon Jonas, and through it all Garnet was to him as a dutiful son.

Jonas in a moderate way had been a prosperous farmer, but in an unfortunate hour he became security for a neighbor, which at the time he and all concerned thought a mere matter of form, so much so that it had almost escaped his memory until the force of circumstances brought it again, with sorrow in its train, to his remembrance. His neighbor failed, and his failure cost Jonas his farm and everything upon it. Jonas did not long survive this calamity, and his gentle wife soon followed, leaving Prudence and Mira penniless. The farm was put up for sale, and a gentleman from the city bought it merely as a speculation, seeing it was selling so low, and was inquiring for a tenant for it when Prudence suggested Clem Pierson.

One cool autumn evening there was, as usual, the little hickory fire burning on the hearth in grandmother's room, and the same faces gathered around it, happy because they were together, although Grandmother Atheling's form was a little more bowed, her eyes a little dimmer, her hair a little grayer, while Mira's sweet sunny countenance wore a touch of gravity from the sorrows



she had borne, while from the pale, delicate youth Garnet had developed into a handsome specimen of noble manhood.

Clem Pierson had been spending the evening with Prudence, and had just taken leave, when there came a tap on grandmother's door, and Prudence entered.

"I wish to have a few words with you," she said in a constrained voice, while a gleam of gratified pique crossed her cold features, "and as it concerns you all, I thought it best to mention it while you are all together. Clement Pierson, as you are aware, has rented the place, and as we expect to take possession the beginning of the year, it will be necessary for you to find other homes. Mira can stay if she wishes, as I shall need some one to assist me, but she can do exactly as she wishes in the matter." And turning abruptly, she left the room.

A dead silence followed. A dull gray pallor like that of death crept over Grandmother Atheling's wrinkled face, while her trembling hands were reached in a blind, groping way toward her grandchild. Mira threw herself on her knees beside her and clasped the aged form in her strong young arms.

"I will never leave thee, grandmother," she cried; "never, never leave thee!"

"Say it again, darling," sobbed Grandmother Atheling; "say that nobody, nothing shall part thee and me."

"Give me a right to protect and care for you both," said Garnet, coming forward; "give her to me, grandmother, and the humble home I am able to provide shall be as much yours as ours. See," continued he,



taking a letter from his coat, "this very day I received the appointment as teacher in the Dorton Academy. We will take a house in the village if Mira consents, and, God willing, we will have a home together the remainder of our lives."

Another tap from Prudence prevented Mira's reply. Prudence always knocked in those days.

"Here is a letter for thee," she said, holding it at arm's length toward Grandmother Atheling. "Clement brought it from the village this evening, and I forgot it when I was in before."

Grandmother had recovered her composure, although her eyes were still moist, and she received the letter in her usual placid way.

"Open it, Mira, child," she said, as the door closed on the retreating form of Prudence; "it is the first letter I have received in many years."

It was from Garnet's father. Mr. Adriance wrote enclosing an advertisement cut from a daily paper making inquiry for one Mira Atheling, whose maiden name had been Mira Mantz, adding that if living she would hear of something to her advantage by applying to Lauren Dubreuil, a well-known attorney-at-law, under whose name the notice was issued. Garnet's father added a few lines to say that the attorney was an old friend of his, and he would call upon him to ascertain the nature of the "advantage," and also to tell him what he had heard through Garnet of Mrs. Atheling.

The next day Prudence was astounded by another letter for Grandmother Atheling, and Timothy, who



was the bearer of it, had his inherent politeness and respect for ladies put to the test as it had not been since he had taken up his abode in the neighborhood.

"Where did you get it, boy?" said Prudence, abruptly, as she took the letter from Timothy's freckled hand.

"I was at Dorton for Mrs. Carleton's mail, and the postmaster asked me to bring it along and see that Mrs. Atheling received it promptly, as it was a business letter."

"Well, what are you waiting for?" said Prudence, sharply, after attentively scanning the address. "Do you expect pay for bringing it?"

Timothy's face flushed, and quick tears of anger suffused his eyes. "I thought perhaps you might wish to thank me," he said, almost haughtily.

"You did as you were told, and I do not know that you require thanks for that."

Timothy turned away, and Prudence again regarded attentively the address upon the letter before knocking at Grandmother Atheling's door.

A corner of the envelope contained the name of Lawyer Dubreuil, with the customary request to be returned within a specified time if not called for,—a request which seemed to Prudence to bristle with importance in proportion to its mystery.

Lawyer Dubreuil had written to say that a brother of one Mira Atheling—*née* Mantz—had died in Australia and had left considerable property to his only relative, the said Mira Atheling, and all that was required to come into full possession was to prove her identity.



Time passed on. Garnet took the class in the academy, but not the house in the village, for Grandmother Atheling had other plans in view for her darling Mira. During the winter, her identity having been proven without difficulty, she received her property, and, sending for the owner of the farm, she made him so liberal an offer for it that he was glad to accept. Clem Pierson also was bought off, and was willing under the circumstances to resign his contract, much to the chagrin of Prudence, now Mrs. Clement Pierson; surmising which, he took good care not to enlighten her until the transaction was completed, and she was compelled, with as good grace as she could assume, to reside in the small house in the village of which Garnet had spoken, while Clem cropped the Bowlsly farm, which had been bought by Mark Bryor.

Garnet and Mira were united under the home-roof, all of Garnet's family being present, and the evening of the wedding, Grandmother Atheling, as a marriage gift, made them joint proprietors of the farm, the home where they had passed so many happy hours, and where they hoped to pass many more.

For the threatened danger had happily passed away; the rose-scented room remained unchanged; the gay chariots and valiant horsemen still seemed to be in motion as the ancient curtains waved in the soft summer breeze which floated through the deep-silled, open windows; the patchwork-cushioned rocking-chairs still held their motherly arms invitingly out; the worsted footstools, upon one of which Grandmother Atheling had in her young days wrought an improbable dog



and upon the other an impossible cat, still looked unfadingly and unblinkingly at each other across the gay rug on the hearth.

Day by day Mira grew dearer to Garnet, as wifeness and motherhood developed her sweet nature, and Grandmother Atheling appeared to have taken a new lease of life in the dear home where peace and happiness ever reigned, because love was the corner-stone.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### A CONSULTATION.

“ And of moments bereft of thy smile, love,  
I am always counting the cost ;  
They are so many sunbeams wasted,  
And so many joys that are lost.”

A YEAR had passed away since the brownstone front had become a boarding-house, and the undertaking proved to be a complete success.

All the gloomy forebodings that had beset Mrs. Amanda Levering had been forgotten in the prosperous state of affairs about her, and the activity of body and mind developed by her changed circumstances. The genial, refined society by which she was surrounded, and the pleasure of having her mother always with her, reconciled her to any little discomforts which crossed her path. She had not lost caste among those with



whom she wished to mingle, as she had darkly prophesied; instead, handsome equipages were very frequently waiting before the main entrance, and her mother and herself received as many calls from those whose acquaintance was worth retaining, as they had done in their most palmy days.

In addition to her executive ability, Mrs. Garrigue possessed a trait which those who were accustomed to boarding found exceedingly rare. She never, in the presence of her boarders, discussed the servant question or the price of provisions. That she had her trials with servants it were rank heresy to doubt, but they were confined to the kitchen, or other family departments of the household, and never formed a theme for parlor or table conversation. Yes, Mrs. Garrigue and Mrs. Levering were leading a prosperous and busy, therefore a happy and, in the main, contented life. To be sure, there were the customary annoyances which appear inseparable from boarding-houses; the pair of lovers, for instance, and the inevitable amateur player and drummer upon the piano.

The lovers belonging to the Garrigue boarding-house were a model couple indeed; so devoted to each other, so oblivious to the miniature world around them, that they monopolized the parlor every evening of their lives with as much *sang-froid* as though they were Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. To give them due credit, they did not by hint or look intimate a desire for such monopoly, but when a lady boarder with crocheting or other fancy work in hand descended to the parlor after tea, wishing to spend a social evening, she



found no one but the lovers, and, after sitting a short time and finding herself *de trop*, she sought again the seclusion of her room. Perhaps another lady tried the experiment with like result ; and in time it began to be an understood thing that the boarders should spend their evenings in their own rooms or that of their friends, and leave the parlor to the lovers. It was not the pleasant meeting-ground it had been the winter before, when all the ladies and gentlemen in the house, and perhaps guests of the different boarders, met of evenings and had a social time.

Applications for board from eligible parties had been very frequent, owing as much to the delightful society to be found under its roof as to the excellent management of the establishment, and Mrs. Garrigue did not wish that impression changed. She was at her wit's end, and resolved to ask advice of her ally, Lawyer Dubreuil.

"They are really driving everybody out of the parlor of evenings," said she, plaintively, "although I will do them the justice to think that they are innocent of such intention."

"Just so, just so, my dear madam ; they are blind,—blind as bats to everybody but each other. Well, well, it is really wonderful how silly young people are when they are in love ; the ostrich, with its head stuck in the sand of the desert, is a Socrates in comparison."

"You are fertile in expedients, Mr. Dubreuil ; cannot you suggest some plan I can adopt for the benefit of yourself and the other boarders without offending them ?"

Mr. Dubreuil considered. "It has always been a



maxim of my life, my dear madam, that in union there is strength; could not you ladies organize and descend in a body, and so rout the common enemy?"

"I do not care to make it a subject of discussion if it can be avoided," replied Mrs. Garrigue. "They are both valuable boarders; besides, I esteem them as personal friends. I also take an interest in the attachment, and if it amounts to anything, which at this time it bids fair to do, think it would be an excellent and suitable match. But that does not help me out of my difficulty," she concluded, with a sigh.

"Quite true, my dear madam, quite true; and that is the point to be considered just now."

"Independent of the lady boarders, who are hampered up in their rooms of evenings," continued Mrs. Garrigue, "there are those young medical students and the other gentlemen, who are compelled to spend their evenings out, because they have no social evenings here such as they had last winter; we must really devise some way to bring about a change of affairs."

"Some amusement or other," replied Mr. Dubreuil; "something that will amuse the lovers as well as the others. Well, well, my dear madam, give me a little time to consider; it has always been a maxim of mine to be sure you are right, then go ahead."

"Take as much time as you think best," replied the lady, "but I hope you will succeed in thinking of something practicable soon, or I fear I shall be under the necessity of giving the lovers a gentle hint, which I should be loath to do."

The next morning, at the breakfast-table, Lawyer



Dubreuil rose and made a short speech, which was listened to with due attention, and elicited marks of approval.

“Ladies and gentlemen, you are all invited to assemble in the parlor this evening. I have a plan in view for spending our evenings this winter pleasantly and, I hope, profitably, and would like your assistance in carrying it out.”

Evening came. After so much speculation and discussion through the day, it was not surprising that every boarder was present in the parlor. It was suggested, and met with unanimous approval, that a literary club be organized, to include every lady and gentleman in the house, each member being privileged to invite one guest to the fortnightly meeting of the society, which was to be called the “Garrigue Literary Society.” Lawyer Dubreuil was appointed president, and Mrs. Garrigue vice-president. Then Mr. Dubreuil nominated one of the lovers for secretary, and the other for treasurer; seconded by Mrs. Garrigue, and passed, to the satisfaction of the new treasurer and secretary, which was the main object the little lawyer had in view.

Of the lovers, the gentleman was Mr. Muncaster, a law student in the office of Mr. Dubreuil, and the lady was Miss Sallie Kemp, the only daughter of a wealthy old gentleman who was also a boarder, but who, being an invalid, retired to his room as soon as his frugal supper of bread and milk was finished, and was seen no more until next day.

One prominent feature of the fortnightly meeting was, that whatever the literary offering tendered by the



member appointed to provide it for that particular evening, let it be sketch, story, poem, or essay, it must be original with that member. Three at least must be provided for each evening, but four would be preferred; and any guest of a member who provided an original article would receive the thanks of the society. Between the readings charades, tableaux, conversation, and music were to give variety to the exercises.

Four evenings of each week the members were to meet in the parlor, at least all who could make it convenient to do so, to arrange the tableaux, and to assist those who were appointed to prepare original papers, if such assistance were desired; and it was expressly stipulated that no member should decline to prepare the article if it fell to that member's share to do so, but they were privileged to decline reading it themselves should they so desire. A small admission-fee was to be charged, both of members and guests, to be appropriated at the last of the season for the purchase of an autograph album for every member of the club, to be kept as a memento of the winter's amusement.

The secretary was called upon to take the names of all the members upon separate slips of paper, and when the drawing for the first original article was made, the name of Mrs. Amanda Levering was drawn.

"Oh, please excuse me!" cried the lady, blushing. "I never wrote but one sketch in my life, and that was a school composition."

"And that won the prize," said Mrs. Muller, smiling. "You see I was there, my dear Mrs. Levering, and know all about it."



Considerable merriment followed this reply.

"Besides, it is unparliamentary to decline," lisped Mr. Walter Bridges, one of the medical students. "If it had been my name that was drawn, you should see how willingly I would comply."

"Ignorance is certainly bliss," quoted Dr. Seneca Watts, the other medical student, *sotto voce*.

"Perhaps your turn may come next, my promising youth," replied the president, smilingly, to Mr. Bridges, with a look which promised that it should, if possible, happen that way.

"Can he not take my place?" inquired Mrs. Levering, deprecatingly. "I will do all I can to assist him in preparing his sketch."

"You can call on any member to assist you also," remarked Lawyer Dubreuil, consolingly. "Please set a good example and conform to the rules of the society."

"But I can never read it myself; I should break down at the very first paragraph," said Mrs. Amanda.

"You need not; I nominate Miss Prudie Harman as the reader of Mrs. Levering's paper."

"I second the motion," said Mrs. Garrigue. And it was decided that Miss Harman, an excellent elocutionist, should read the first paper for the "Garrigue Literary Society."

At the second ballot, strange to say, "Mr. Walter Bridges" was the name drawn.

Mrs. Levering's blushes were dim in comparison to those of Mr. Bridges. "Why, I never was known to write an original paragraph in my life," lisped he.



"Except a recipe for hair-oil," corrected Dr. Seneca Watts.

"It is unparliamentary to decline," remarked Mrs. Levering.

"And you can have all the members to help you," said the vice-president.

"I will read it," volunteered Miss Prudie Harman.

"I feel like a bird in a snare, or a fish in a net," said the hapless youth; and it was noticeable that he fell into a revery which lasted until the third ballot decided that the third original article was to be prepared by Dr. Seneca Watts, when he came out of his study of a theme, to unite in the general laugh at the discomfiture of Dr. Seneca.

The fourth writer was not drawn by ballot, but any member or guest who was willing to add to the pleasure of the evening was solicited to thus oblige. The society then adjourned.

"That was a stroke of policy, my dear madam; that was a stroke of policy,—that of giving the lovers each an office," said Lawyer Dubreuil to Mrs. Garrigue after the members were scattered and in groups about the spacious parlor. "It was on the principle adopted by physicians, who use a counter-irritant in obstinate cases; the only difference is we reverse it and use a counter-amusement."

"And a very effective principle it bids fair to be," smiled Mrs. Garrigue.

"That was a grain of wisdom I gathered while teaching a district school, when quite a young man, in a little village named Dorton. I have never forgotten it."



Mrs. Garrigue's appreciative smile encouraged him to proceed.

"You see the young people of the neighborhood every winter had a society which they called a lyceum, which met once a week in the school-house, the school-teacher always being president. Well, my dear madam, every evening they were annoyed by four or five large boys, who congregated outside and amused themselves by pounding on the shutters, whistling through the key-hole, and occasionally throwing stones against the door. The teacher had no more authority over them than any one else, so they had to endure what they could not cure. Well, my dear madam, without taking undue praise to myself, I wish to tell you how I put an end to the whole annoyance. Why, the simplest way in the world. I persuaded them all inside, and gave every renegade of them an office. To be sure, we had to manufacture a few to suit the exigency, but no matter, they each had an office and felt of as much account as anybody, and, my dear Mrs. Garrigue, it worked like a charm."

The evening for the first meeting of the club came round. Every member was present, and many of them had an invited guest. The admission-fees rattled merrily into the treasurer's box, the literary exercises were remarkable for their excellence, and everything passed off well.

The lovers sat together on a divan, and were as much interested as one could expect under the circumstances. The first meeting of the Garrigue Literary Society was a success.



## CHAPTER XII.

## CAROLINE'S LOVER.

“ When thou art near,  
The sweetest joys still sweeter seem,  
The brightest hopes more bright appear,  
And life is all one happy dream,  
When thou art near.”

To Caroline Levering, reared in a retired farm-house, everything in and around her uncle's elegant home, situated on one of the most fashionable streets of St. Louis, came with the force of novelty, and each and every pleasure was anticipated and enjoyed to the full.

She was young and inexperienced, but also apt and intelligent, and developed more in the first three months of her visit than in any one year of her existence at home. This new life just suited her mercurial disposition, and she dropped naturally into the luxurious manner of living, so different from anything she had ever experienced or even imagined. She enjoyed everything; days and weeks flew by on golden wings; she never before had thought that life could be so full of interest and pleasure.

All the education Caroline had received previous to her leaving home was obtained at the district school in Dorton.

In the winter this school was given up to boys, and



the girls of the neighborhood who were too large to go to Cousin Melie's little home-school had to be satisfied with what instruction they could gain through the summer months. Caroline's education, therefore, was limited. Her cousin Sylvia had, however, an excellent governess, whom Dr. and Mrs. Harkness requested to bestow the same care upon the education of Caroline as upon their daughter, and Caroline applied herself so diligently to study that her progress surprised and charmed them all.

But a few days remained of the old year 18— (eighteen hundred and dash, as Dickens says), and the usual preparations for welcoming the new were briskly progressing at the home of Dr. Harkness. It was Caroline's first winter there, and she entered into the spirit of the thing with keen interest, for Mrs. Harkness, after due consideration, had decided to let Sylvia and Caroline help entertain the callers, although Caroline was only fourteen, and her cousin but a year older.

For years past no New-Year receptions had eclipsed those of Mrs. Harkness, and she decided that this should not be an exception. Several young lady friends each year assisted her in doing the honors, whose toilets were marvels of richness and artistic beauty, and those of Sylvia and Caroline, while suitable for girls of their age, she was solicitous to have tasteful and becoming. As for her refreshments, she decided that they should surpass those of any previous year.

"There is one bother I always have," she had remarked one afternoon while she and the girls, pencil



and memorandum-book in hand, were making out the list of refreshments: "I expect nothing else but Brother James will come meddling around protesting against my offering wine to our callers. I declare he vexed me so last year with his puritanical notions that I was almost tempted to tell him to oblige me by not calling upon us on New-Year's days, if the mere sight of wine upset him so."

"I wonder if your brother James really thinks it wrong, or considers that because he is a minister it is his duty to frown down everything of the kind?" remarked Caroline.

"Oh, he is sincere, you may depend. You ought to have heard the parlor sermon he preached to me last New Year about 'leading some soul to ruin by my thoughtless persistence in having intoxicating beverages;' but his twaddle counts as nothing with me. I am twenty years older than he is, brought him through the measles and whooping-cough, and consider myself quite as capable of managing my own affairs as he is to manage them for me."

"There is no truer proverb," said Caroline, laughingly, "than 'A prophet is not without honor save in his own country.' What would some of Mr. Ridgely's parishioners, who look upon him as almost infallible, think to hear you?"

"Oh, I think the world of him too," said Mrs. Harkness, quickly. "His only fault lies in being too good; he makes mountains out of mole-hills, and seems to think every little innocent thimbleful of wine as a pitfall to catch unwary youth. But somehow I can



never look upon his opinion in any light but a boyish enthusiasm which will subside as he grows older."

"What does Uncle Harkness say to your brother's interference?"

"He just laughs at him for worrying, and me for being provoked at it; but as he sees I always carry the day, he troubles himself no further."

"Perhaps he will not say anything about it this year," remarked Sylvia, "as no evil result ever followed any of our receptions."

"I am looking for him every day," sighed her mother.

"I don't believe that any gentleman that ever called here has ever been a bit the worse of the wine they drank," continued Sylvia, "and our wine is noted for its age and excellence, and some of them drank a good deal."

"I reminded Brother James of that last year," said Mrs. Harkness; "and I took time by the forelock, and told him some time ago that it was not worth while to prepare any arguments for this year, for we would not be the first to set an example of penuriousness."

"Poor Uncle James!" laughed Sylvia; "he put on the longest face you ever saw, and sighed as bitterly as though the faults of the whole community were on his shoulders, but he only said, 'The future will tell.'"

"Well, he certainly will not force his opinions upon you this year," remarked Caroline, serenely, "when he knows it will be of no use."

"I don't know about that," remarked Mrs. Harkness. "He always had the most persevering nature I



ever knew. He never gives up a notion he once takes in his head; it appears to me that opposition only strengthens him in his opinions. Why, when he was a little fellow he would have his notions of right and wrong, and after one had fatigued one's self nearly to death arguing a point with him, the first thing you knew, without any talk about it, he was having his own way. Oh, I know him thoroughly; but I am going to have my own way in my own house, as much as I think of him."

Sabbath morning dawned bright and beautiful, and the Harkness family went to church, as was their regular habit. Brother James had not been around with his customary New-Year's remonstrance, and Mrs. Harkness, though professing to care but little for his opinion, was rather jubilant in consequence. She resigned herself to his discourse, at peace with him and all the world, notwithstanding the sealskin cloak in the pew before her wrapped in its soft folds a rigid temperance woman, who had once been a Crusader.

The sermon was over, and Brother James, with a slight tremor in his voice, begged the attention of the congregation for a few moments longer. He wished to ask them not to place alcoholic drinks upon their reception-tables on the coming New-Year's day.

"I scarcely deem it necessary, my friends, to give this advice, or to utter this desire, as I feel almost sure there are no families in my congregation, with one exception (glancing toward his brother-in-law's pew), who are willing to turn their parlors into bar-rooms on New-Year's day, or any other day. If I thought so I would



beg them to consider well before laying such traps for unwary feet. Many a young man," he continued, "who would shun a place which was kept for the sole purpose of dispensing liquors, would be tempted to drink among friends whom they looked upon as examples, and when fair ladies were the tempters. Do not, my friends," he concluded, "sully the first page of this fair New Year with such a blot."

There was one person, at the very lowest calculation, in Dr. Harkness's pew who, compelled to be silent, was swelling with combined indignation and shame. Several other pairs of eyes, guided by those of the minister, had travelled stealthily in that direction, and the sealskin coat, which, by reason of proximity, could not see how neighbor Harkness relished this home-thrust, nodded a cordial acquiescence with the minister's sentiments.

The feelings of Mrs. Harkness that afternoon, we are sorry to record, were anything but devotional. Anger at her brother's underhand mode of attack, as she considered it, was the predominant feeling, and plans of ways to show her resentment, without drawing upon herself or him the censure of his congregation, occupied her mind the best part of the afternoon. Not that she wished to really wound or offend him; her pride in him, and affection for him, was deep and strong; she only wished to let him know that she was tired of his unwarrantable interference in her affairs, and to let him know once for all he was not to lecture her in public with impunity.

"To think," she complained to the other members of



the family at tea-time, "he had no more regard for my feelings than to draw the attention of the whole church toward me! I saw several look around to see how I took it, and felt that all were doing so."

Brother James had noticed it also, and although not regretting his action in the matter, was saddened and depressed that it was his sister whom his conscience compelled him thus publicly to rebuke. As for Dr. Harkness, he enjoyed the whole affair heartily, and treated himself to a hearty laugh every time he thought of it. In all the little diversities of opinion between his better half and himself she came off in flying colors and left him nowhere; and that Brother James, whom he had always looked upon as the meekest of men, had shown himself equal to the emergency, filled him with admiration, and awakened a deeper respect for one whom he had always looked upon as too amiable to have much moral courage.

"I hope, now, he will call to-morrow," said Mrs. Harkness, angrily, to Sylvia. "I want to admonish him that I am not to be lectured in church by a boy."

Several groups of gentlemen were standing conversing with the ladies, and with each other, in the elegant parlors of the Harkness mansion when Brother James made his call.

Sylvia and Caroline had received orders from Mrs. Harkness not to offer him refreshments, as she wished to take that duty upon herself. She was in no hurry about it, either, but allowed him to mingle with the other gentlemen until it suited her convenience.

Caroline, looking as sweet as a violet in her simple



but elegant toilet, had received the callers and exchanged the compliments of the season with the ease and composure of one long accustomed to society, and, withdrawing aside from the others, was for a moment looking at something on the street. As she turned from the window her hand was taken and held tightly in that of Mr. Ridgely. "I can do nothing with my sister and niece," he said; "they are joined to their idols. You are yet innocent of leading a fellow-creature into temptation; this hand is yet guiltless of a brother's blood; promise me to keep it so."

Caroline glanced up at the form which towered above her. Mr. Ridgely's face was pale, his eyes moist with unbidden tears.

Her aunt and Sylvia were regarding her with vexed solicitude, her uncle with an amused smile.

"I promise you," she replied, gravely; "promise for now and always."

"Thank God for this victory," he whispered, humbly, and, pressing her hand in a farewell, he bowed slightly to his sister and the others, and left the house.

One of Hesba Levering's chief accomplishments was the ability to make excellent home-made wine, and there was scarcely a fruit which she had not put to the test some time or other as to its capabilities of being converted into her famed cordials. Not that she cared for it herself; in fact, she seldom tasted it; but there were few persons for miles around who had not received a bottle of it, providing they were sick or ailing. Even persons in the city had sent for her black-berry cordial, which was considered a valuable tonic.



Caroline, therefore, had no scruples in regard to wine, for she had been accustomed to it all her life; yet her sympathies were altogether, though silently, with Mr. Ridgely in his contest with his sister. She cared nothing for wine herself, so it was no hardship to promise, therefore she promised.

The years of Caroline's visit passed on, and Mr. Ridgely did his share toward educating her. He lent her books; he took her and her cousin Sylvia out in his carriage very frequently; all the objects of interest in and around the city were visited, and lessons learned from all; he interested himself in her music and drawing, and in all her studies encouraged and assisted.

One would almost wonder that a handsome, popular, and wealthy young man would waste his time entertaining and instructing a school-girl, when the loveliest and most accomplished young ladies of St. Louis would have felt flattered with attention from him. But the truth was Caroline did not appear to look upon him even at seventeen in the light of a lover. To her he was Sylvia's uncle. She was perfectly at her ease with him, and showed her pleasure at his coming without any attempt at disguise.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE SILVER-LINED CLOUD.

“How excellent is woman when she gives  
To the fine pulses of her spirit way!  
Her virtues blossom daily, and pour out  
A fragrance upon all who in her path  
Have a blest fellowship.”

MR. MARK BRYOR had for some time been the owner of the farm which had once belonged to the Bowlsllys, and had never left it except for a day's visit to the city, and that but seldom. Taking one of his colored boys to open gates, he drove over to Dorton post-office every day, returning as soon as he received his mail. He was a regular attendant upon the services of an Episcopal chapel attached to Dorton Academy, went to Levering's mill when business called him there, occasionally attended a sale of stock, went every year to the county fair and election, and yet no person in the neighborhood could say they were really acquainted with him. Even Clem Pierson, cheerful and talkative as he was, could make nothing of him, and was kept to farm topics alone, when in conversation with Mr. Bryor. For the first time in his life he found a man who did not laugh at his first witty sally, so Clem never tried a second in the presence of his dignified employer.

Mr. Mark Bryor had one peculiarity among many



others which brought grief to the tender heart of Timothy. He allowed nothing to trespass on his place, barking dogs being his especial abomination. Grace Darling would trespass, and she would bark just as much as pleased her merry little heart. She appeared to have a partiality for Mr. Bryor's domains, and everything seemed to encourage that preference. If she started a rabbit in Mrs. Carleton's woods it was sure to run into those of Mr. Bryor, only separated by a fence, and Grace Darling after it.

When Timothy set snares and box-traps and went in the early dawn to examine them, Grace Darling ran on ahead, and had a good time barking in Mr. Bryor's woods while waiting for Timothy, which Mr. Bryor was sure to hear, for he appeared ubiquitous; and the village boys, who appreciated choice fruit and melons, affirmed that he prowled around all night.

One morning Timothy arose betimes to visit his snares. A light snow had fallen,—the very kind of weather for rabbits to be abroad. He had thought of slipping off without Grace Darling; not that he dreaded Mr. Bryor, for he knew nothing of his dislike to dogs, but because she had followed him to the village twice the afternoon before and also to the mill in the evening, and Timothy knew she must be weary. He descended quietly into the kitchen, warm and light from the coal fire smouldering in the large stove, and quiet, for none of the family were yet astir. Grace Darling, curled up on a pillow, appeared to take no notice of Timothy, not even stirring to let him know she was aware of his presence; but the moment he



reached for his cap she was alert, and when the outer door was opened she shot out like an arrow, barking at the pitch of her sharp, clear voice.

Timothy ran briskly over the crisp surface and reached a gentle knoll, from whence he could have a view of Mrs. Carleton's, Mr. Bryor's, "Ogilvie's Pride," and, in fact, most of the farm-houses around, and even the village of Dorton. Refreshed by sleep, light-hearted and happy, he stopped to take breath and to look around him. Everything looked so beautiful under its pure mantle of snow. He could from his elevated position see Mr. Wheeler, Archibald Levering's miller, emerge from his cottage, lantern in hand, descend the path to the mill, unlock the door, and enter. Timothy knew but a few moments would elapse until the water would be turned on, and the huge wheel would start on its unhasting yet unresting daily round. He waited to hear it.

He saw the first puff of smoke issue from the chimneys of "Ogilvie's Pride," and his eyes were keen enough to discern the well-fed, indolent servants lazily opening the shutters, and the gay, plaid-turbaned head of Aunt Chloe, as she went from the kitchen of the mansion to the cooking-shed and smoke-house. The bark of a distant watch-dog sounded clearly and distinctly in the morning air; the east was beginning to redden, tinging with rose each frosted tree and shrub. Timothy loved the country, and in its present aspect he thought nothing could be lovelier.

The deep thunder of the mill aroused him to a sense of passing time, and, whistling to Grace Darling, he



ran on, and soon reached the snare. It was bent almost to the ground with a fine fat rabbit, around which the dog was capering in an ecstasy of joy. The boy's face flushed with delight; he viewed it all around, then concluded to let it remain until his return from his traps. Grace Darling, as usual, ran on before, and for a moment he lost sight of her, when the sharp crack of a rifle, followed by a yelp of mortal pain, caused his tender heart to bound. Almost paralyzed with dread, he followed the sound. There lay Grace Darling, blood flowing from her mouth, and quivering in the agony of death.

The boy's grief was too deep for tears. He took the suffering creature to his breast, and laid his pale cheek against her glossy head. She tried to caress his hand, but her strength was gone, and with the last quiver of her dainty limbs Timothy fell senseless on the snow. When he revived, he found himself on the lounge in Mrs. Carleton's sitting-room; and through the half-opened door he heard her voice, suppressed, but trembling with passion. "He is a poor orphan, sir; the dog saved his life and the lives of many others; no wonder he loved it. It was an unmanly, wicked thing in you to kill it."

No reply.

"With the means and education you have, you might be of some use in the world, instead of a blight and a terror; no wonder everybody hates you and shuns you."

No reply.

"Leave this house, sir, instantly! and never let me see you on my premises again."



No reply. The shutting of the door and departing footsteps were sufficient answer.

Mrs. Carleton's sons set out for the academy alone that morning, for Timothy, who had for some time been promoted from Cousin Melie's class to the district school in Dorton, was not able to accompany them. His tears flowed silently during the greater part of the forenoon, as he lay nearly motionless on the lounge ; and Mrs. Carleton, passing in and out on her household errands, felt deep sympathy for the sorrowing boy, mingled with indignation against the unprovoked cruelty of her neighbor, Mark Bryor.

She had just arrayed herself in her neat afternoon attire, and sat down, sewing in hand, in her rocking-chair before the open fire of the sitting-room, the crackling, singing, and simmering of which had lulled both Timothy and Grandfather Carleton to sleep, when the sound of sleigh-bells stopping at the gate caused her to lay thimble and sewing aside and go to the window, from whence she saw three ladies. One glance sufficed to make known to her that it was General Porter's elegant sleigh and noble black horses ; and by the time Uncle Pomp, the coachman, had arrived at the hall-door, Mrs. Carleton guessed the whole story as well as he could tell it. Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Hoyt had come to spend the afternoon and take a sociable cup of tea with her, if it entirely suited, and on their way had called for Cousin Melie and asked her to come along, and Cousin Melie never required persuasion. It suited Mrs. Carleton exactly, as, to do her justice, it generally did ; and by the time they were ushered in, Fanny, at



the bidding of Mrs. Carleton, had drawn all the rocking-chairs from the fireless parlor into the glowing sitting-room.

"I shall not punish you for not letting me know you were coming," said Mrs. Carleton, pleasantly, "by making you sit in a half-warmed room. Fanny could soon put a fire in the parlor, and it would seem warm there, but the walls would be cold, for there has been no fire there for some time, and grandfather might take cold. Perhaps next time you will send me word, so I can have it thoroughly heated," she added, with a smile.

"Indeed, we shall not," said Mrs. Porter, in the same tone; "this room is too delightful for anything; that glowing fire, and those violets in bloom in that sunny window, cannot be excelled. There, now," she continued, glancing out the window, "I intended to tell Uncle Pomp what time to come for us, and he is gone."

"Never mind," said Mrs. Carleton, "he will come early enough; it will be moonlight."

Grandfather Carleton, aroused from his nap, was delighted with the chatter going on around him, and sat smiling serenely, glancing from one speaker to the other with pleased attention.

"But what have we here,—a sick boy?" said Cousin Melie, lowering her voice and moving toward the lounge. "Why, it's my little friend, Timothy."

"Not sick," replied Mrs. Carleton, "but in trouble. I will tell you all about it after a while."

The ladies settled around the hearth, and fancy-work



was the order of the day. Timothy almost forgot his troubles in listening to the running fire of their chatter. They reminded him of a flock of birds. Cousin Melie expected to go to the city the following day, and the subject of shopping was discussed in all its bearings.

"I hope none of you people need anything about this time," said she, laughingly; "for, as usual, my memorandum has more on it for other folks than for myself. People think that old maids have more time on their hands than they know what to do with."

"Do you like to purchase for others?" questioned Mrs. Hoyt, a shadow born of some unpleasant memory flitting over her bright face.

"Oh, yes, when I succeed in pleasing them, and I have been pretty fortunate in that respect so far."

"Well, I cannot say that I have," said Mrs. Hoyt; "indeed, I have been almost tempted for my own peace of mind to go quietly off and let no one outside of my own family know when I purpose visiting the city. I almost feel that duty to myself renders such a course excusable; and that you may not consider me too disobliging and selfish, I will give you some of my experience in that line.

"The very last time I went my visit was limited to three days, and I had enough commissions from my friends to fill up the whole time, to the exclusion of my own. It rained one whole day, and for my own purchases I should have never thought of going out, but I knew they would be disappointed if I went home without them, and perhaps think I did not try;



for some persons are under the impression that all you have to do in the city is to step out and get exactly what you wish without any trouble.

"Old Mrs. Peters sent by me for a cap. She had always made them herself after some sort of fashion, and I knew a cap brought from the city would be an era in her toil-weary life, so I really expended more walking on the cap than I should have done upon a whole outfit for myself. My trouble was to get one plain enough to suit her, and amid all the splendors of dress caps, breakfast-caps, and lace caps of every description, it was a difficult matter.

"After a while I came across one, which among its stylish contemporaries was almost severe in its simplicity. I rejoiced that I had at last overtaken the object of my search, so I bought it and sent it to her as soon as I reached home that evening, and before I could repose my weary frame on my couch that night back came the cap, the bill, and a message that she could not think of wearing such a flyaway thing as that at her time of life, and asking me to take it off her hands.

"As I did not number caps among my accoutrements, I felt very much like the man who had the present of an elephant; but I made the best of it, and sold it to another old lady for a few cents less than I gave."

"That reminds me of my last purchase for a friend," said Mrs. Porter, smiling; "but, contrary to your experience, I wished to take it off her hands, but she would not gratify me. An intimate friend of mine—



our hostess, ladies—commissioned me the last time I went into town to purchase for her some real Valenciennes lace. I was particularly anxious to suit her, for I know she is a connoisseur in laces, and know also that she has a good opinion of my judgment.”

“Who told you so?” inquired Mrs. Carleton, laughingly.

“A little bird told me; but, to proceed. She had admired a piece of my lace and wished me to get a piece as near like it as possible without going to too much trouble. I had much on hand that day, a visit to my dentist’s among the rest, and the day was nearly spent before I entered a large store, where an endless variety of choice laces were shown me. A bright gas-light shone directly upon them, and even to an experienced eye, the piece I selected was of handsome pattern and of superior quality.

“The evening of my return, dear Mrs. Carleton here, called for her lace. She was charmed with it, for it was even a prettier pattern than mine. Together we inspected it and commented on its fineness and beauty. Alas! when viewed by daylight it was only an imitation instead of the real Valenciennes. And she would not gratify me by letting me have it,” she concluded, plaintively.

“It answered every purpose,” replied Mrs. Carleton. “You had given a Valenciennes price for it, so that satisfied me; and when going among judges like yourself,” she added, quizzingly, “I only wore it by lamp-light, and that satisfied you, so there was no harm done.”



“Well, now, I think I can equal either of these experiences,” said Cousin Melie. “Last spring I undertook to match a piece of fringe for a wedding-dress for Prudence Pierson. You all know her, so it is not necessary to make explanations. She had bought dress and trimmings at one of the best stores,—Easter’s,—and I will do her the justice to believe that she thought all I had to do was to go directly there and get it. Of course it was all gone, and I tried in large stores and small stores, and every place where I thought it possible that particular shade of fringe might hide, but could not match the sample. Finally, in an unlucky hour for me, I was advised to go to the fringe-factory and have it woven to order. I knew Prudence was particularly anxious to have it by a certain time, so I walked all the way there and ordered it, giving them particular directions to send it to my stopping-place by one o’clock next day, as I was to leave the city in the only afternoon train, which left at two for Aberdeen, where I was visiting. It was promised without fail; and in the mean time, having it off my mind, I set about my own business, and when finished returned to my stopping-place too tired out to sleep when the time came for repose.

“The next day I looked for the fringe, as promised, but at one o’clock it had not come, neither was there any sign of its coming; and I waited with my wrappings on in a perfect fever of impatience until twenty minutes after the time, when I decided to have the fringe expressed to Prudence as soon as it arrived. Giving my friends the necessary directions, I had reached the



street door, when whom should I see meandering round the corner but the boy with the fringe. He was accompanied by a boon companion, and they were treating themselves to a game of ball with the bundle of fringe, tossing it backward and forward until they reached the door where I was standing, in a frame of mind not to be coveted, and which would be a stretch of complaisance to style serene. I am sorry to have it to record that I snatched the fringe from that boy with more celerity than ceremony, and gave him the change which I had been shifting from one hand to the other for the last half-hour, then made a rush for the depot, only to turn about and empty the contents of my satchel to find a pencil with which to sign his delivery card, which he leisurely exhumed from the depths of a pocket which I verily thought must reach to the toe of his boot. When I did finally reach the depot the cars were just steaming out of sight, and I had to return and stay over Sunday, much to my inconvenience, and I greatly feared to that of my kind entertainers."

"Did the fringe suit?" asked Mrs. Hoyt, naïvely.

"I never inquired, fearing it did not," replied Cousin Melie, joining in the laugh which followed the question.

"Grandfather has a mite to add to these reminiscences, I know by his smile," said Mrs. Carleton.

"Your experiences, ladies, remind me of one I was favored with in my early ministerial life," replied Grandfather Carleton, with a smile. "I was morbidly conscientious in regard to performing every duty which could be required of me, but I must say that one re-



mained unperformed—for lack of time. A gentleman wrote to me from a neighboring city informing me that a feeble-minded youth had wandered off from his home, and it was thought possible that he might have strayed to the city where I then resided. I was asked to kindly interest myself in his return by going to all the station-houses and make inquiry according to the description given. If not there I could then go to the House of Correction, Refuge, the hospitals, and the homes for children, and report success to the writer. In the post-script I was reminded that no doubt I would be gratified by this trust reposed in me, as it would give me an opportunity of visiting these institutions, and perhaps do good. It is scarcely necessary to state that no stamp for reply was enclosed."

"Grandfather's experience caps the climax," cried Cousin Melie, with tears of mirth in her eyes. "We will have to hide our diminished heads and wait for better opportunities."

"Well," said Mrs. Hoyt, "it is both common and proper to end with a moral; what is the moral to all we have been saying?"

"Why, it is very plain to be seen, I am sure," said Mrs. Carleton. "Here it is,—when we tax our friends and acquaintances to purchase anything for us, let us compensate them by trying to be satisfied with their efforts to please."

That evening, after the company had gone, the boys in the sitting-room, getting their lessons for next day, and Grandfather Carleton in bed, Mrs. Carleton and Timothy sat by the stove in the kitchen. Mrs. Carleton



was seeding raisins for fruit-cake, and Timothy, lonely and sad, crept out and took a seat beside her.

"If I could only get my poor dog and bury her," he said, sorrowfully, "I would not feel so badly ; but I am afraid to go ; I am afraid I might meet Mr. Bryor."

"I saw him pass in his sleigh just as Pomp turned in the lane this evening ; suppose you go while he is away. It is moonlight, and the snow will enable you to find her."

Comforted, Timothy took his cap and went. He followed his and Grace Darling's tracks in the snow until he came to where she met her death, but the body was not there. With tears flowing, he turned to retrace his steps, when Mr. Bryor stepped from behind an oak-tree and confronted the terrified boy.

"Do not shrink from me," he said, almost imploringly. "I am sorry I killed your dog. If money could restore her it should be freely given. I crave your forgiveness. The deed is done, never to be undone, but I will try to make amends. I am a lonely man ; have no relatives except a brother, from whom I am estranged. I want something to occupy my long evenings. I am tired of being alone. If you wish an education, I am capable and willing to give it to you."

Timothy was too bewildered to reply ; he turned abruptly away.

"Boy !" said Mr. Bryor, placing a detaining hand upon his shoulder ; "say you forgive me,—and accept my offer."

"Overcome evil with good,"—Granny's favorite motto came into the boy's mind. He thought of her



as he had last seen her,—helpless and homeless, but patient and resigned in her bed in the hospital; he reached out his hand to Mr. Bryor.

“I will ask Mrs. Carleton, and do as she says,” he said, humbly.

After that night, all leisure times and every evening found the boy alone with Mr. Bryor, whom he had learned to esteem, to revere, to love. Mr. Bryor gave to him the results of his rich experience, the benefit of his cultured mind. Together they roamed the wooded hills in search of plants and minerals; together contemplated the starry heavens, and Mrs. Carleton, noble and unselfish, looked on well pleased.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### “OGILVIE’S PRIDE.”

“Let those who on these pages look  
This chapter read with care;  
For, though a plain and simple book,  
A mystery lies here.”

It was the anniversary of the birthday of Madame Angela, and the little girls of the neighborhood of Dorton were having a merry time in the charming flower-garden and hip-roofed cottage which belonged to “Ogilvie’s Pride.” This cottage had formerly been



occupied by the overseer, but at the time specified was the pleasant home of two persons known by the people of the neighborhood as Aunt Ursula and her niece, Madame Angela.

All afternoon the little ones had gambolled over the grassy paths and woven garlands in the shady summer-house, fragrant with honeysuckle and woodbine. A savory odor of some foreign cookery crept from the vine-covered door of the kitchen, and was joyously commented upon by the little ones as a forerunner of coming delicacies, and at the same moment one of the flower-crowned sylphs ran from the cottage, crying gleefully, "Oh, girls! Madame Angela says we may arrange the dishes on the table for tea; and we are to take tea in the *berceau*, where she and Aunt Ursula have theirs every fine evening, and we are to have out the beautiful French tea-things and the dear little silver tea- and coffee-pots; and, if Aunt Ursula is willing, we are to carry out her writing-table to eat off of, for the one already there is too small for so many. Let us go and ask her." Catching the enthusiasm, they all made a rush for the *berceau*, or summer-house, to proffer their request.

At first sight one would almost wonder that they could be so familiar with the occupant of the summer-house as to ask a favor of any kind, so stately and commanding the presence, so reserved and even haughty the demeanor, so foreign and *outré* the whole appearance; but over all was the fine gild of culture and refinement, of gentle manners and thorough kindness, which proved their childish instinct was not at fault.



Aunt Ursula was seated in an arm-chair, her rather large but white and beautifully moulded hands lying idly on her lap, her gaze fixed absently on the gables and peaks of "Ogilvie's Pride," glistening in the beams of the setting sun, seemingly oblivious of all the rural beauty which surrounded her. Her thoughts appeared far distant from the drowsy hum of innumerable bees in the clover near by, the soft, affectionate lowing of the milk-white cow on the other side of the enclosure, and the vesper-song of the birds in the snowballs and lilac bushes which laid their white and purple blooms against the end of the cottage.

When the patter of youthful feet and sound of glad voices reached her, the brow relaxed, the wandering thoughts were recalled, and one of her rare smiles illumined the noble countenance, and the "*Oui! mon enfants*, all that the house and garden contain is at your service to-day," was just the answer they appeared to expect. They set to work with eager hands to remove the books and writing materials from the larger table preparatory to placing it in the summer-house.

"Dear Aunt Ursula, you won't mind if we set your chair out, will you? Then you can read, if you wish, and we will not be in your way," said Mary Willoughby, the fairest of the flock.

"I will not be in yours, you mean, you cunning elves. How much reading do you suppose I could do while you were all chattering like magpies? No, but I will set my chair and myself under this willow, and give you some music."

"Ah, that will be splendid! and you will excuse us



if we talk sometimes while you are playing, will you not?" inquired another chirping voice.

"I will excuse everything to-day, my pets," replied Aunt Ursula, as she drew the bow across the strings of a mellow-toned violin with an emphasis which proclaimed her no stranger to its mysteries.

To one unacquainted with her it would appear singular that she should prefer the violin to any other instrument, yet it seemed almost to possess articulation under the influence of her master-hand. To the children it was the most natural thing in the world, their greatest pleasure, their most cherished reward.

The music, like herself, was foreign to the core. No airs that were familiar to her listeners, save as they had learned to love them as they flowed from her instrument, but wild, martial music, now in thrilling tones proclaiming heroic deeds on distant battle-fields, now in silvery cadences breathing the memory of those deeds in some fair lady's bower.

The solitaire diamond ring upon her right hand blazed and sparkled in the flickering light that shimmered through the foliage; the flowers seemed drinking in the melody as they nodded upon their slender stems; and Madame Angela coming for a moment to the door of the cottage, rewarded the musician with an appreciative and meaning smile.

A casual observer might have been excused for wishing Aunt Ursula's costume less quaint and weird, more modern in design and finish, and yet, if requested to suggest anything better adapted to her style and appearance, would probably have acknowledged him-



self puzzled and at fault. It seemed, unique as it certainly was, better suited to her than any other feminine habiliments in vogue at that day; suited the quiet dignity of her movements, the pure olive tint of her complexion, the brilliant blackness of her magnificent eyes, the silver threads in her night-black hair. One might also have wished for a tint of rose in the colorless cheek, a less grave expression about the pensive mouth, a little unbending of the proud carriage; but, take her as she was, hers was a face, once seen, not likely to be forgotten,—a face where intellect so predominated over mere physical beauty that one instinctively felt that any change would not be for the better. But it was when she spoke that the subtle and intangible power which her presence exercised over others was most deeply felt. Her low and full-toned voice haunted one like the refrain of some half-forgotten melody that was sweet and mournful, yet vague and undefined.

Her glossy and abundant black hair was combed low on the temples and put plainly back of the ears, where it was lost in the gloom of a black silk mob-cap, so colossal in its proportions, that, not content with obscuring the whole back of the head, it encroached upon the face, and, after wandering aimlessly, as it appeared, over cheek and chin, descended low upon the throat, where it was finally enveloped in the folds of a white silk shawl of beauty and price, which was crossed upon the ample breast. Over this cap was worn a white one of delicate gossamer fabric known as *leise*, of which the silk one formed the lining. Her gown of heavy



black silk, guiltless of flounce or fold, was ample in fulness and rich in quality, and fashioned simply as the robe of a nun, while over it was worn a white linen apron, which left nothing to be desired as to length and breadth, and with the newly-ironed creases making a checker-board of its polished surface.

She seemed absorbed in her music until Madame Angela appeared with smiling face to add the finishing touches to the neatly-spread board, when she carefully and tenderly replaced her violin in its case, and as the flutter consequent upon selecting seats subsided among the childish guests she arose, and, extending her hands over the table in her French fashion, in low and reverent tones asked a blessing.

Although an epicure might have been dissatisfied with the simplicity of the meal, to the congenial spirits around the board it was in every sense complete. The children were completely charmed with the French comestibles, so simple in their elements, so elaborate in their construction, upon which Madame Angela, with inherent art of pleasing children, had exercised her most cunning skill. Besides these foreign dishes, the delicate rolls, fragrant coffee, butter with the faint aroma of clover lingering in its creamy richness, honey, and delicious strawberries formed a happy combination of the delicate and substantial, while the running brook back of the summer-house kept up its tinkling symphony as an accompaniment to the mirth and good cheer.

No tie save that of friendship bound these children to their entertainers or to one another; but Madame



Angela, who was fond of the society of children, had for years made it a pleasure to invite the little people of the neighborhood to her birthday supper, an invitation which was never declined.

When the cheerful repast was over, and the evening shadows warned them that it was time to depart, they clustered around Aunt Ursula, who lovingly bade them adieu; but it was upon Madame Angela, who accompanied them to the gate, they lavished kisses and caresses, which they never thought of bestowing upon Aunt Ursula, dearly as they loved her; and she sent the little creatures on their homeward way, their pockets well filled with bonbons and other confections of her own making.

After their departure, while Madame Angela cleared away the remains of the feast, Aunt Ursula, with her innate love of out-door life and distaste for confining employment, took her accustomed evening walk, pruning-knife in hand, among her roses and vines; for the culture of fruit and flowers was her recreation and delight, and her garden was the admiration and pride of the neighborhood. No bride for miles around considered her toilet complete without a bouquet of orange-flowers and lily of the valley from Aunt Ursula's bounty; no pale occupant of the narrow house was borne to the grave without a floral accompaniment from the same kind hand.

When all was completed they lingered in the summer-house, as was their wont, enjoying the calm beauty of the sweet summer night. Although faint hues of rose and amber tinted the western sky, mellow moon-



light flooded the earth, marbling the dim cottage into a fairy palace, silvering tree and shrub, and glorifying the faces of the occupants of the *berceau*.

"Years ago," remarked Aunt Ursula, breaking the silence born of the solemn beauty of the scene, "I thought not, in my blind despair at the turn our affairs had taken, that the time would ever come when I could truly say I was content with all that life seemed to offer; but at last I cease to long for the stir and activity of the world, every day am more thankful for the repose of this little retreat, and content, if my Master so wills it, to never leave it more."

"And why should we not be content?" replied Madame Angela. "Life is short, the end will soon come. What matters it, after all, where it is spent, if we are fulfilling our Master's will? If it was our destiny to be removed from the pleasures of the world, we are also removed from its temptations and dangers. Then, again, all is changed since we left our sunny clime. The friends of our youth would not be there to welcome us, should we return. We would be strangers to all we used to love. Other hopes and interests have filled the places we once occupied. Life has flowed on and left us stranded, and the dear friends here who trust and love us are evidence that happiness can be found anywhere if we rightly seek it."

"Always my comforter, my patient Angela. When in times past I witnessed your sweet submission, your cheerfulness under trials, your unwearied endeavors to perform menial duties from which your whole previous life had been exempt,—when I saw you, who formed so



bright an ornament to the circles you were by birth and education so fitted to adorn, apparently happy in this isolation, which to me was more dreary than a cloister, —God forgive me!—instead of being lost in wonder and admiration, I inwardly censured the want of pride that allowed you to submit so humbly.”

“But you were patient also; you were silent under the dispensation; you never rebelled.”

“Ah! not in words, my Angela; but when I look back on the years which have passed, I cannot but wonder at the forbearance and long-suffering of my Maker,—His endurance of my fretful murmurings, my bitter and childish repinings, my wicked and sullen rebellion; I wonder at His tenderness in bearing with my sinful pride, and His mercy in at last crowning me with peace and submission.”

“Submission, then peace,” corrected Madame Angela, reverently; “there can be no peace without submission.”

“True, my Angela. As though He who placed me in the high position I was so proud of filling had not the right to remove me in His own good time and manner, I refused to acknowledge the many mercies which crowned my daily life, and thronged my daily path. My pure conscience, my untarnished reputation, my security from the certain death which had threatened me, my perfect health, your sweet companionship, weighed as nothing against the wealth and position which had been mine, but was mine no longer. In my bitter humiliation I never imagined that when the necessities which enforced this seclusion had passed into



oblivion they would take with them all desire to mingle again with the world."

"Yes, His dealings with us have been those of a loving father. He has allowed us to want for no needful thing; and, best of all, He has left us each other."

"And how speeds the gallant colonel's wooing?" said Aunt Ursula, archly, breaking the long silence into which they had fallen. "Becoming as he deems your widow's cap, methinks he is more than anxious to have you change it for the orange wreath and bridal veil."

A bright blush overspread the sweet face of Madame Angela, as she replied, laughingly, "Ah, I fear our nation is not singular in its fickleness; I saw him press your hand most fervently, here in the *berceau*, the other evening; neither of you knew I was peeping through the closed shutters. I fear his allegiance to me is rather rickety."

"All for your sake, Angela," said Aunt Ursula, smiling. "He was asking me to intercede for him; as though I would be likely, if I could, to give up all that makes life endurable to one even so worthy as Colonel Willoughby."

"But he does not wish you to give me up; he said that nothing would be a greater honor and pleasure than to have you make his house your home. You should have your own apartments and servants, and be in all respects as retired as you wish, while he would esteem you as a dearly loved mother. Now, what more could you ask?" added Madame Angela, quizzingly.

"Noble fellow; he is worthy of some good woman's love, and I hope it will be granted to him."



"And then," resumed Madame Angela, "when I drew back mortified and chagrined at his proposal, he appeared mystified and hurt at what he supposed my haughty rejection of his offer."

"Ah, that is what I feared," said Aunt Ursula, quickly; "and yet you did the best you could; you did all that any one could who was so peculiarly situated, to discourage his attentions; it was not your fault that he persevered."

"Does not Mary Willoughby remind you of some one you have seen long ago?" said Madame Angela. "The impression has been deepening ever since I have known the child, and to-night, when she threw her arms around my neck and embraced me, she reminded me so forcibly of some dear one, and yet I cannot think who it is."

"Is it not Christine?" inquired Aunt Ursula, softly.

"Ah, yes! Why did I not think of that before? Now I know why it was I felt from the first so drawn to little Mary. Oh, Christine! dear, dear little Christine!"

"And if I were called hence before you," resumed Aunt Ursula, as if anxious to direct the conversation from the sad channel whither it was drifting, "to no one on earth could I leave you with more sincere happiness than to Colonel Willoughby."

"Providing I were willing."

"Yes, providing you were willing."



## CHAPTER XV.

## CHRISTINE.

“Dost wonder yet that nothing strange  
Hath caught thy watchful eye?  
Fruition, may that feeling change  
To tender sympathy.”

MANY years before the birthday festival of Madame Angela the good ship “Miriam” made her first voyage across the blue Atlantic. Launched from an English port, her destination was the United States. She had set sail under the most favorable auspices. Wind and weather had lent their aid to bear her swiftly along, and, until within a few days’ voyage of Baltimore, she had made a comparatively speedy run.

But now, for days she had remained almost stationary, as though spell-bound. The stiff breezes which had borne her so cheerily along seemed to have considered their mission accomplished, and refused to carry out their contract. From dawn until evening captain, crew, and passengers prophesied and speculated upon the likelihood of a change of weather, but the sky remained an unclouded arch of blue; no welcome haze hid the moon, but night after night she smiled down in solemn splendor upon them. Nothing gave symbol or promise of the motive-power for which all so ardently longed.



The bleak monotony of a lengthened stay on ship-board, as a voyage across the Atlantic inevitably was in those sailing-vessels, merged into *ennui* and dreary wretchedness as the days crept on, and the king of day rose calmly and smilingly from his watery bed, and ran his unclouded journey westward, helpless to assist.

On the vessel was a little girl apparently between three and four years of age, who from the beginning of the voyage was an object of attention and sympathy from every one on board, owing to her sweet and winning manner, her helpless and unprotected situation, and the peculiar circumstances under which she had sailed. Her mother, as they gathered from her artless prattle, was companion for an infirm old lady in Liverpool, and this was her only child. The little girl was much petted, not only by the mother and her aged employer, but visitors to the house noticed and caressed her, being charmed with the beauty and intelligence of the child. On the day the "Miriam" sailed, she, with two of her playmates, was attracted by a band of music, which in marching down the street passed their playground, and following it, they soon reached the wharf where, mingling with the crowd, they were carried on board. There she was amused by the novel and exciting scenes of a departure, and getting separated from her companions, who having seen others leave the boat followed them, she crept behind a cabin-door which was ajar, and in a little while, "rocked in the cradle of the deep," was lost in happy slumber.

Presently the door opened, and two tall ladies, clad in deep mourning and with thick black veils concealing



their features, entered the room, and upon turning to close the door they noticed the child. Not wishing to disturb her sweet repose, the younger and fairer of the two raised her gently from the carpet, and, tenderly pressing a kiss upon the flushed cheek, laid her in one of the berths, and seating herself by the window, while her companion removed her wrappings and lay down to rest, she watched the receding shore with eyes fast dimming with home-sick tears, which she carefully concealed from the sight of the occupant of the berth.

She made a sweet and pleasing picture as she sat there; her head, from which she had removed bonnet and veil, gently reclining against the casement of the cabin window, the soft sea breeze fanning her fair patrician brow. She was tall and finely formed, possessing that indescribable air of serenity and dignified gracefulness which proclaimed her as one born to wealth and position. Her eyes were large, and blue as summer noonday skies, and possessing a depth of character seldom seen in those of azure tint, varying with the emotions of her nature, deepening to almost black when unusually stirred; golden wavy hair, seemingly impatient of the control of the jewelled comb which confined its soft luxuriance, and escaping in little tendrils, which caressed the rounded cheek glowing beneath them with the rosy tints of youth and health. The sweet expressive mouth, tremulous now with emotion, the delicately moulded chin, and slender throat were all models of refined feminine beauty; the whole appearance denoted one unused to rough contact with the world, one that



was sheltered and protected from all that was distasteful and uncongenial.

The sleeve of the simple black dress, which fitted her with the pliant grace that distinguished everything she wore, falling back from her slender wrist, disclosed a beautifully rounded arm, and soft and dimpled hand scarcely larger than that of a child.

When her sleep was over the little waif opened her merry hazel eyes, rubbed her piquant nose with her plump fist, and a happy smile dimpled the rosebud mouth as, without raising her curly head from the pillow, she chirped, "Mamma, I are awake; indeed I are."

The sound attracted the lady, and turning from the window with a smile that betrayed the warm, motherly nature, and carried its welcome with it, she bent over the couch and said softly in broken English, but perfectly intelligible to the bright little listener,—

"Whose little girl are you, dear?"

"Mamma's girl and aunty's pet," was the prompt reply.

"What is mamma's girl's name?"

"Crissy."

"And what is Crissy's other name?"

"Dot no more," said the little one, solemnly, shaking her roguish head, and reaching for a stray curl which hung within reach of her hand.

"I love little girls like you; will you not come and sit upon my lap and look out at the pretty water?"

The child obeyed instantly, and was soon entertaining her new friend with circumstantial accounts of her play-mates,—her white rabbit and her kitten.



Time passed on, and as the inquiry for her which the lady had been momentarily expecting was delayed, she set the child down, and passing to the side of the berth, said something in her own language to her companion.

"Yes, leave her with me," was the reply in the same tongue. "I will take care of her." And giving the child some trinkets to amuse her, the lady resumed her mantle and veil and left the cabin.

"I have seen no one who knows anything of her," said she, upon returning. "The captain says that no child of that age was registered, and the passengers whom I met knew nothing of her. What shall we do with her?"

"Take me to mamma," volunteered the little girl.

"I would, my love, gladly, if I knew where she was. Where is she?"

"Oh, mamma, mamma! where is she?" cried the little one, imploringly. "Take me to mamma!"

Something in the child's manner touched a chord in the lady's breast which vibrated painfully, and taking the sorrowing little creature in her arms, she wept without restraint. "She reminds me so much of Helena," she sobbed, "my cherub babe, who is safe in heaven, while some poor mother is grieving over the loss of this sweet child; perhaps she was sent to comfort me."

"But we have no home to offer her," said the other, anxiously. "We are homeless ourselves; will be strangers in a strange land."

"I know it," replied the lady, tearfully. "I know it would be worse than folly to think of such a thing, but what will become of her?"



Happily, the mind of a young child is easily directed from sorrow, and being of a happy, joyous disposition she was comforted and amused, and although she shed many tears before daylight closed in, she slept peacefully all night in the arms of her new friend.

When morning came, and she strove to rise, she was totally unable; sea-sickness, that wretched ailment, took possession and held her in its relentless grasp. For weeks she was unable to leave her cabin, and her new-found friends proved her faithful nurses. Every day they became more attached to her, and in that trying time received more insight of her sweet, unfretful disposition than months of perfect health could have given them. At length when able to go on deck, though the sad experience had robbed the cheek of bloom and the eyes of their roguish light, and added years apparently to her age, she was an object of loving interest to all. From captain to cook, all vied with each other in anticipating every wish.

The fair-haired lady (for her companion never left the seclusion of her state-room from the beginning to the ending of the voyage) was her constant attendant. Seated upon deck, they enjoyed for hours each day the varied tints of sky and ocean, watching the sun go down in the sea and the moon and stars come forth. Notwithstanding the discomforts of a sea-voyage, she had many, many pleasures which overbalanced them. She skimmed over the vessel like a sea-bird over the water,—now dancing along at the side of the captain as he took his morning walk on deck, now in the cook's room, surveying with the eye of a connoisseur the



culinary preparations going on there, everywhere welcomed and guarded. Truly, no child with scores of doting relatives ever had a happier trip across the wide expanse than this little one, who had no claim on a human being there.

"Yes, we are becalmed, that is certain, and the One above only knows when we shall ever move on again. We may as well make the best of it; no use fretting, as I can see. I might as well spend this nice morning on deck, carving out toys for Lady-bird, as anywhere else, mightn't I?" And the big, cheerful, good-hearted captain seated himself beside the fair-haired lady and took Crissy on his knee. "What do you say to that, Lady-bird?"

The child answered by an affectionate smile, and one of the plump hands crept into his large palm and nestled there like a downy bird.

"What are you going to do with her, ma'am, when we land?" he said, in a low tone. "Do you intend taking her with you?"

"I only wish I could," she replied, her beautiful eyes darkening and filling with tears; "but I cannot."

"Well, that makes it all right," said the captain, brightening. "I know an old gentleman and his wife who would give their two eyes—*four*, I mean," he corrected, "for just such a mischievous nuisance as this," pressing the child closer to him with his arm and giving her a quizzical look, which she understood perfectly and returned with interest. "She could stay there until I go back to Liverpool, where I will try to find out if



there is anybody to claim her, and if there is, she can go back with me the next trip."

"Her mother, should she be living, will think the time long before she sees her," replied the lady; "but I cannot see that anything better can be done, and you think your friends will be kind to her?" she inquired, anxiously.

"Kind! They won't know how to thank me enough. They have none of their own and are rich, and the only squall I see ahead is to get her away from them if her folks in England want her. It will come like an iceberg on Holstein and his wife to part with her."

"I know that by my own feelings," replied she, tearfully. "No one could be with her and not love her, and I am glad you have the kindness to interest yourself in providing her with a home. God will reward you for it."

"And if He don't reward you for your kindness to her, ma'am, it will be queer. If you were her own sister you could not have taken more care of her. My old mother used to say to me when I was a little shaver, 'Daniel, remember one thing,—good deeds never die;' and I believe, like everything else she said, it was true as gospel; and if there's not a blessing laid up for you somewhere, there's none for anybody. Why, this little frock she has on is one of your making, isn't it, ma'am?"

"Yes. I am sorry I had nothing but black to make it of, but I wished to save the little dress she wandered off in, thinking it might lead to her identification."



"Well, she looks sweet as a pink in it anyhow; and now that that point is settled, you and I will go below, Lady-bird, and get that turnover pie cook promised us. And now," he continued, as they walked away hand in hand, "if it would only condescend to blow up a bit of a gale, I for one would not complain."

His wishes after a time were granted: storm and tempest prevailed for a while; the "*Miriam*," no longer idly stationary, now plunging in the trough of the sea, now riding the topmost waves, gallantly kept her way, proving herself entirely seaworthy. The storm subsided and left behind it welcome breezes, which wafted her cheerily along, and in a short time brought them safely into harbor.

Then came the time of parting. The moment the vessel touched the wharf the passengers vanished in every direction, and amid blinding tears the lady parted with her little charge, and taking a ring of rare beauty and singular workmanship from her finger, she clasped it in the soft palm of the child.

"Keep it always, darling, for my sake. Never part with it, and some time, God willing, I will see you again."

"Yes, yes," said the captain, cheerfully. "I will tell them to take care of it for her. Give me your hand, Lady-bird." And clasping the hand, ring, and all in his, the lady saw the dear little form borne up the street in the strong arms of the captain, one chubby arm thrown confidingly around his neck and her little bundle of clothing under his arm.

She could restrain herself no longer, she must fol-



low and see at least something of the home to which the little one was consigned; and hastily throwing on wrappings and veil, she rapidly followed. She did not wish to be noticed by the captain, the child, nor the persons with whom he left her. All she desired was to judge for herself by the surroundings what kind of a home the poor little waif had found; to note the house, so that, if she remained for a time in Baltimore, she could pass it occasionally and perhaps be cheered by a glimpse of the sweet child face.

A loud knock from the captain's brawny fist on the oaken door of a handsome, substantial dwelling brought a small colored boy instantly, who stared at the sailor and his unique burden in undisguised wonder.

"Anything to be surprised at, youngster?" said the jolly tar. "Go tell your master that Captain Warfield and Lady-bird are waiting at the door, and tell him to come right away, for he hasn't a minute's time to stay. Now that's a rhyme, Lady-bird, isn't it?" smiling upon the child, as the boy went quickly upon his errand.

The tearful watcher on the other side of the street saw a kind and pleasant-faced elderly gentleman come to the door, shake cordially the outstretched hand of Captain Warfield, and then before any words passed between them reach out his arms for the little girl, who without the least hesitation allowed herself to be taken.

"That's right," said the captain, heartily. "I knew she would have a good home with you, Holstein. I wanted to bring you a present, and I thought a daughter would be the very thing you would like best." And he rapidly recounted the circumstances of



her having been thrown upon his care. Before he had concluded his narrative a sweet-faced elderly lady made her appearance and stood beside her husband, and the watcher could see the flush of delight which mantled her cheek, and the glad sparkle of her eyes, as she took the little girl and kissed her.

Into her charge the captain gave the little package of clothing, the ring, and all the information he could of the donor, and while he was thus engaged the lady, satisfied that her charge had found a good home, retraced her steps rapidly to the vessel, and with her companion was ready to leave when he came aboard. Without suspecting that she had witnessed the whole affair, he gave them a circumstantial account, accurate in every particular, of his disposal of Crissy, and at their request directed them to a quiet inn, and in a short time they were installed in a pleasant, comfortable room, where they were content to abide until they could get suited in a home.

That very evening, while the fair-haired lady was taking her solitary cup of tea,—for her companion, as on shipboard, never left her room, but had her meals taken to her,—she overheard a conversation which decided her destiny for life.

On such trifling incidents sometimes hang our destinies.

The door between the supper-room and the one adjoining was ajar, and the lady could see two gentlemen, seated in arm-chairs before a glowing grate, engaged in social conversation. It was a damp, chilly evening, and the cheerful comfort of the room was a pleasant



picture, and soon became an interesting one to the waiting listener. One of the gentlemen had recently returned from a gunning expedition out in the country, and was entertaining his companion with an account of his trip. It appeared from the tenor of his discourse that he was pleased with his visit, had been generously entertained, and his admiration of Maryland hospitality was unbounded.

"I don't know what time they take to think about dying down there," he was saying; "for it appears to me all their time is used up planning for good times on earth."

"Yes, I have heard that a short life and a merry one is the rule," said the other; "but I suppose, like every other, it has its exceptions. How's Ogilvie getting along?"

"Oh, first-rate: the very best place in the world to put in a rainy day; good fire, plenty of crabs and oysters, no woman and children bothering around, and the best servants in the world. I tell you what, Wagner, if a man wants to enjoy life, keeping bachelor's hall is the only way, after all. That would be the life for me if I had the means to manage it the way Ogilvie does. I declare if old Jude cannot beat the beater in cooking wild game; and if you want to see fried chicken and pounded biscuits that would make a man fight his uncle, just try old Jude's."

"Tastes differ, of course," was the quiet response; "such a life would not suit me. Are there no white persons on the place but himself?"

"Not now; he always had an overseer, who lived



across-lots from the mansion-house, but Ogilvie got the notion in his head that he (that is, Ogilvie) was not taking enough exercise for his wholesome, so he discharged the overseer, and since the beginning of the year has been overseeing the place himself. He got afraid of apoplexy or something, and if high living brings it on, as some folks say it does, Ogilvie's your boy."

"Then you think he has no notion of marrying and bringing a wife there?"

"Not he. He must have had a bitter experience with a woman some time or other in his life; some say he courted a girl, and she died; others say she jilted him. Be that as it will, he never speaks of one, and I don't believe he would ever look at one if he could avoid it."

"And who has the house the overseer occupied?" said his companion, more for the sake, it appeared, of carrying on his share of the conversation than for any interest he took in the answer.

"Oh, nobody; and a pretty little place it is! Pity to let such a place stand idle."

"Don't he try to rent it?"

"Catch Ogilvie trying to rent it; nothing like that costs him a thought. I don't suppose he values it more than an old peach-basket, and would give it to the first one that asked it, rent free."

The lady listened to this dialogue with an interest that deepened every moment. Was not Providence pointing out the very way wherein they should walk? Why not apply for the place, and, if possible, obtain



it? She lingered to hear if there would be anything more said which would be of use to her; but the conversation was drifting into other channels, to which she could have listened if she wished, for it was a public conversation carried on in a public room, therefore she did not merit the stigma of eavesdropping. But it had no more interest for her; so she quietly left the room, and took counsel of her companion. They obtained the address of Mr. Ogilvie without any difficulty, wrote to him, and in a day or so received an answer, giving them grant of the house and possession at any time; so in less time than they thought possible, in a strange land, Aunt Ursula and Madame Angela found themselves in a peaceful, quiet home suiting them in every way.

In their first communication to him they had asked what rent he wished for it, and as he failed to answer the question they dropped him a line asking him to specify the sum. As the conversation Madame Angela had overheard the night of their arrival in Baltimore led them to expect, he put no value upon it; it was of no account to him in any way; they were welcome to it for nothing if they wished it. To that they would not agree; he must put a value upon it, and after that they would trouble him no more. To satisfy them he set a price almost nominal, and they took possession. The first day of every year, as long as he lived, a sealed note containing the rent was sent by a trusty messenger, who returned in a short time with a receipt from Mr. Ogilvie, and that was the extent of the communication between the landlord and his tenants.



Sometimes, from one year's end to another, they never met; for Mr. Ogilvie, with the exception of his daily ride over his plantation, seldom left his dwelling. Every morning, in his white linen suit and broad-brimmed Panama hat, mounted on his black horse, and attended by a small colored boy to open gates, he took his daily airing; but he always steered clear of the cottage and its occupants, and they as sedulously avoided him, so all parties were suited.

Aunt Ursula left the precincts of her home upon no pretence whatever. Those who learned to love her, notwithstanding her apparent coldness of manner, must, if they wished to enjoy her society, seek her; she never sought them. There was always a searching of the countenance of the neighbors who, attracted by their kindness, came to see them, as though deprecating the smile of ridicule her *outré* appearance would occasion at a first interview; but after the first embarrassment at seeing a new face passed away, although the reserve natural to her remained, she proved to be a delightful companion. With children she was always natural and self-possessed; their society soothed and tranquillized her, and although she never caressed them, they instinctively felt she was their friend.

With Madame Angela it was somewhat different. For miles around she was known for her kindness to the sick and the afflicted, who considered her small hand endowed with power of healing possessed by no other. No day too stormy, no night too dark, to keep her from the bedside of the suffering who solicited her gentle ministrations; no presence more welcome, no



prayers more consoling, than those offered for the dying; no sympathy more comforting than hers for the stricken mourners. But, excepting her visits to the house of affliction and attendance upon the occasional services of the village church, she seldom left her home.

Thus the years passed tranquilly; years which were gradually silvering the heads of the occupants of the small gray cottage, but years fraught with the blessings which contentment brought to them. The curiosity which their sudden appearance had excited in the neighborhood had long ago given place to loving esteem for their many endearing qualities.

Although Aunt Ursula was never obtrusive, her influence was felt in the neighborhood. She was such a stay and counsellor. Her powerful intellect stimulated the struggling ones to higher exertions; her words of encouragement or advice roused flagging energies; her praise, not lavishly bestowed, warmed, strengthened, and cheered. She was not only the mainspring of her own home, but also of the neighborhood. Her advice was sought upon all knotty points of discussion, her peace-making qualities solicited to allay disturbances. Standing aloof from active communication with her neighbors, she was upon neutral ground; consequently, unbiassed by party faction, her opinion was unprejudiced, her advice just and equitable. A dispute or misunderstanding disappeared like frost under the eagle gaze of her brilliant eye; her subtle mind grasped a hidden meaning and dragged it forth to the light. Double-dealing could not escape her penetration, nor deception fail of win-



ning the contempt it merited. Yet, while scorning the offence, the offender was counselled so kindly, so much allowance was made by her for the faults of education, that she made few if any enemies among those she felt it to be her duty to admonish and reprove.

In the fulness of time, but suddenly and unexpectedly, Mr. Ogilvie died one winter night, quietly in his chair. No one knew when the spirit took its flight, for the servants, after clearing away the remains of his early tea, had left him, as they thought, and as he himself thought, well as usual, sitting by his cheerful wood fire in the open hearth of his library. When they arose in the morning they found him in the same position gazing stonily at the embers, from which hours before light and heat had fled.

By law there were two heirs to his estate, his brother's orphan daughter (Miss Sallie Ogilvie, afterwards Mrs. Richard Bryor) and Colonel Willoughby, only son of his only sister, and by will "*Ogilvie's Pride*" was inherited by Colonel Willoughby. The nephew had the generous qualities of the uncle without the failings. He was a Christian, noble in appearance, and possessing a highly-cultivated mind,—the very last person to disturb the tender attachment of Aunt Ursula and Madame Angela for their modest home.

Colonel Willoughby's family consisted of but three members beside himself. Those were his wife,—who was an invalid,—his little daughter Mary, and a distant cousin, who occupied the place of housekeeper.

During the short time Mrs. Willoughby lived after



taking possession of "Ogilvie's Pride" she and their tenants had never met. Faint echoes of their kindness and usefulness reached her sick-room. She felt they were persons with whom she could trust her precious child so soon to be deprived of a mother's loving care, so a short time before her death she wrote a polite note to Madame Angela entreating her to have an oversight over Mary, and to allow her to remain with them as much as convenient. At the time of the birthday anniversary, Mrs. Willoughby had been dead nearly two years, and Mary had been the beloved companion and pupil of the ladies in the cottage, who loved her as their own, and she often remained days at a time with them.

It was dreary for the child at "Ogilvie's Pride," and Colonel Willoughby used that as his most persuasive argument to induce Madame Angela to become his wife and mother to his motherless child.

"Yes, providing you were willing."

The words were scarcely spoken that night when Aunt Ursula and Madame Angela sat in the summer-house enjoying the lovely moonlight evening, when a carriage came rapidly up the broad and level road and stopped at their gate. The night was so bright they had no difficulty in recognizing the equipage. The handsome, high-mettled horses, the glittering silver-mounted harness, the colored coachman and footman, were owned by Colonel Willoughby; but what could be their errand there at that late hour? They were not left long in doubt.

Colonel Willoughby had been thrown from his horse



and his life endangered. He wished to see Madame Angela on some business matters. Would she go?

Of course she would. When did Madame Angela turn a deaf ear to sorrow or distress? Feeling as though moving in a dream, she allowed herself to be helped into the coach, and was driven rapidly away. It was well the drive was short, and soon came to an end, for Madame Angela was fast becoming incapable of sustaining herself. She was white and haggard and trembling when she alighted at the door, where she was received by the housekeeper, who, being excited herself, failed to notice the nervous condition of Madame Angela, as she conducted her through the brilliantly lighted hall and up the soft-carpeted stairway to the door of Colonel Willoughby's room, where she left her to make her entrance alone.

Although in the extremity of danger, Colonel Willoughby's mind was clear, and he suffered but little pain. He noticed in Madame Angela what the housekeeper had failed to see. Her ghastly, sorrow-stricken looks could only be caused by grief for his approaching dissolution. She could not be so deeply moved unless she loved him, and hope sprang up in his heart,—not for himself, for earthly love could avail him nothing now, but for his daughter, whom he loved more than life.

"I knew you would come," he said, extending his hand, as she sank, weak and trembling, in a chair by his bedside. "Something told me you could not deny the dying that which you have refused me while in health. My physician tells me that my time is short,



and I have much to say. Promise me that you will grant a dying man's request. Make 'Ogilvie's Pride' your and Miss Ursula's home after my death, and thus be protectors of my orphaned Mary. Oh, it almost maddens me," he continued, his eyes filling, "to think she may become the prey of some fortune-hunter, who will seek her for her wealth alone; for she will be rich not only with what she will inherit from me, but in her own right. Her mother was an orphan, was adopted by a wealthy family, who left her their property, and my Mary gets it all when she comes of age. They have been dead several years, and Mary has no one to look to but you. Will you promise?"

"I will."

"And Miss Ursula?" inquired the colonel, anxiously.

"Will view the matter in the same light."

"Merciful Father, I thank Thee!" said the injured man, feebly, as he closed his eyes in prayer. "Now I am happy; now I can die in peace. All that remains for me is to give you some instructions in regard to my affairs. My will is made; I attended to that a month ago; you will find it among my papers in my *escri-toire*. In my will I have appointed Miss Ursula and yourself as guardians of Mary. My attorney will see that a trusty overseer is provided, and you will have no charge or trouble with outside matters, for it is my wish and hope that your life shall not be disturbed by my death. It remains for you to say, Angela, whether there is any need of my leaving a will," he said, taking her hand, and gazing anxiously into her colorless face.



"In what way?" said Madame Angela, faintly, a tinge of rose coming into her cheek.

"Become my wife even now, and there will be no need of a will. The law allows the wife of an hour the same rights as those of a score of years. Let me send for a chaplain this hour. Then my dying moments will be blessed by the presence of my wife."

"I cannot,—oh, I cannot!" said poor Madame Angela, growing paler than before. And, rising from the bedside, she glided to the door, and opening it stealthily, she glanced down the long hallway. It was tenantless, and coming back, she said, speaking rapidly,—

"Colonel Willoughby, when you came to this neighborhood I had been here many years. Did no rumors reach you of our reticence in regard to our former life?"

"Not a word; no one spoke except in terms of loving praise of your kind and useful lives."

Madame Angela became more tranquil; the troubled look passed from her eyes, and she proceeded more firmly, but in a low voice.

"Then I hope it will not be too much of a surprise or shock when I tell you that I am not a widow, as you have supposed, but a wedded wife."

"And your husband?"

"Is the lover of my youth, loving and beloved."

A long silence reigned in the sick-room after these words were spoken. Madame Angela sank back in the depths of the easy-chair by the bedside, seemed dreading the effect of her words, and gazed anxiously upon the dying man.



She would not have recalled her words if she could ; it was no more than his kindness to her, and the confidence he reposed in her, merited. She could not let him die without telling him that she was not what her manner of dress and opinion of the neighborhood had led him to suppose. She felt that it would be deceiving him not to confide so important a matter to him ; it might change his plans in regard to little Mary, but she would do the right, let the result be as it would.

When the communication first reached Colonel Willoughby's ear a look of mute surprise alone marked his features ; but as she furtively watched him she saw that look had given place to one of grave perplexity. His thoughts were rapidly travelling the lanes and by-paths of the years which had intervened since he had knowledge of Madame Angela. His fixed eye and corrugated brow showed that his sagacious and penetrating mind was unravelling the thread of a fabric of which the clue had been but just put into his almost nerveless hand. All at once his eye lighted, his breath came and went quickly, and reaching out his hand, he grasped that of Madame Angela.

"I see it all now. Of course you could not be my wife. God bless you both and bring you home to heaven ! That will not change my plans," he continued, after recruiting his failing strength with a cordial which Madame Angela held to his lips. "I have but a few more directions to give, but before you leave me I wish to intrust to your care a box containing some treasures for Mary. They were her mother's," he remarked, as, obeying a motion of his hand, Madame Angela brought



a rosewood box, which resembled a writing-desk, and rested it on a chair by the bedside.

He selected a key from a bunch she handed him, and requested her to unlock it. She complied, and raising a piece of satin paper, a little blue merino dress met her view, then a dainty white ruffled apron, and a little pair of worn shoes, hardened by time, but which caused a thrill to pass over Madame Angela which almost deprived her of consciousness, and lastly a ring, the very one she had clasped in the little hand of Crissy on shipboard so many years before.

“Colonel Willoughby, how came you by these things?” she exclaimed, her eyes darkening, and her lips perfectly colorless from emotion.

“They were my wife’s, you remember I told you: I wished to keep them for Mary.”

“Who was your wife?”

“Christine Holstein. The ring was given to her by a lady who took charge of her when she crossed the ocean alone from England, and of whom Christine spoke tenderly until the day of her death. Why do they thus affect you?”

“That ring was mine. I clasped it in her hand the day I parted from her,—Christine, my little Christine, who slept in my arms, and whom I loved as my own,—and she was your wife. Did she never return to her home? I supposed she had left America long ago.”

“No; her mother was dead when word was sent back that Christine had found a good home with Mr. Holstein; they adopted her, and she was loved as a daughter.”



"Lived within sight of my cottage for months and I never knew it," sighed poor Madame Angela. "Ah, that was too cruel!"

"It was indeed a cruel fate that kept you apart. Christine spoke of you until the day of her death. She could not remember your appearance, and, although Captain Warfield gave the Holstein's your name, and described you as accurately as he could, all their, and my endeavors to trace you were of no avail."

"We did not give the names we bear now, on ship-board, or at the hotel in Baltimore where we stopped, so they had no clue."

"And now," said Colonel Willoughby, "will you do me one more kindness? Send the carriage for my attorney: I have a little more business to settle with him before I depart. While he is with me the carriage can take you back to the cottage. I shall never see you again in this world. Farewell!"

Madame Angela obeyed Colonel Willoughby's wishes to wait for the arrival of the attorney in the parlor below; then she took her departure from "Ogilvie's Pride," which was so soon to be her home.

Before the sun rose, Colonel Willoughby's spirit had returned to the God who gave it. Mary Willoughby lost a devoted father, the neighborhood an influential citizen, the church one of its most useful members, and Madame Angela a true and faithful friend. The benefits he could not bestow upon her while living he reached forth to her from the grave, and she could not refuse to accept them.

When the will of Colonel Willoughby was read the



day of the funeral, it was found that Aunt Ursula and Madame Angela were appointed guardians of Mary Willoughby during her minority. They were to make "Ogilvie's Pride" their home until she became of age, then Mary and they could make arrangements as to their remaining with her or seeking another home. In case of Mary Willoughby's death before she attained majority, "Ogilvie's Pride" was to belong to Madame Angela, to will and bequeath as she deemed best.

A liberal annuity for life was bequeathed to Aunt Ursula and Madame Angela, to be paid into their hands the beginning of every year. They left the humble home which had become endeared to them, and took up their abode at "Ogilvie's Pride." No looking forward now to lonely and poverty-stricken old age. All that was removed by the munificence of the husband of the little waif whom they had befriended. They had cast their bread upon the waters, and after many days it had returned.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## CAROLINE A HEROINE.

"The weak one waxes brave.

A gleam of worth, a noble deed  
Lights up a robber's cave."

ARCHIE LEVERING'S father had been his aunt Hesba's pet. Her desolate heart clung to David in his boyhood with an affection deeper than was perhaps possible with his mother. Mercy was one of those affectionate beings, easily influenced, mild and forbearing, but her feelings were neither deep nor strong. She was one who would nurse her child through a long sickness with untiring patience and devotion, sparing herself in no way; yet, were that child, notwithstanding all her sleepless care, taken by the angel of death, her submission was so perfect that most observers would have mistaken it for indifference.

It was to Hesba that David had gone with all his boyish troubles and confidences; Hesba who gave him what little pocket-money he required, and whom David rewarded with boyish love equal to the filial affection he had for his mother. And now David's son was there in David's old place, and yet Hesba could not roll back the tide of years to take him into her heart and cherish him as she had cherished David.



She had grown older. The three — Archibald, Mercy, and herself—had rested in quietness so long that a new element, like that of an active, growing boy, disturbed and disconcerted her, and Archie had been there many weeks before she began to feel really satisfied to have him about.

As for Archie, he became better satisfied every day. He went to Cousin Melie's school, until he should be far enough advanced for promotion to the new school-house on the hill, and from thence to Dorton Academy, and in his leisure hours interested himself in everything about the place: currying the old gray horse, which soon showed signs of the extra attention it was receiving, and petting every animal on the place that was willing to be petted. There were so many objects of interest to a boy, surrounding Archie. The mill, for one thing, was a continual source of pleasure. He never wearied watching the huge water-wheel as it performed its allotted task with such dignified faithfulness, and the miller's admiration was hearty indeed at the boy's quickness in understanding the management of the machinery. Many happy hours did Archie spend in the family of the miller, who lived in the little whitewashed cottage down by the mill. Yes, he was certainly contented, which was more than could be said for his young aunt, Caroline.

One would suppose that before many weeks had elapsed Caroline Levering would have naturally dropped into the niche she had occupied before her visit to St. Louis. But such was not the case. The letters which she received from her cousin, Sylvia



Harkness, and which Caroline considered her only pleasure, but added to the measure of her discontent. The gay, sparkling missives, filled with gossipy news of the sayings and doings of the brilliant world of society of which Caroline had once been a valued member and from which she considered herself unnecessarily drawn, formed a striking contrast to the answering letters, and no one was more conscious of it than Caroline herself.

Archie's letters from his mother also spoke of the pleasures of their winter evenings, specified by Mrs. Amanda with the design to amuse and instruct her boy, and which answered the desired end without creating one thought of discontent. These were read by Caroline with eager interest, and the contrast bitterly drawn between the lives of the writers, and her own objectless existence. Although since her return home her brother David's widow had sent her several kind and pressing invitations to visit the city, she had never gone, for the simple reason that she would not step foot in the antediluvian carriage, and there was no other conveyance.

"Caroline," said her aunt one morning, as the young girl languidly arose from the breakfast-table, "there is to be preaching over at the village this evening. Will you go?"

"Oh, Aunt Hesba, what good could it do me to go trailing through the wet grass for the sake of hearing a stupid, ignorant preacher, and see people with bonnets on ten years behind the times?"

Hesba's face flushed angrily. "That is the very reason I asked you to go, Caroline. I thought it



might do you good, and I don't know anybody who stands more in need of it than yourself. It is only a mile across to Dorton, as you well know, travelling it twice a day, as you did when you were younger and better. The grass is not damp at this time of year, and one has a good long rest there before walking the mile back."

"You are not going, are you?" inquired Caroline.

"To be sure I am, and you certainly ought to stand the walk as well as I."

"You do not go alone through these lonely fields, do you?"

"No; Archie, the dear boy, will go with me. Mrs. Wheeler goes when she can, and we sometimes call for Mrs. Grayson, or Marcia."

"Archie was saying this morning before you were up, Caroline," said Mrs. Levering, who had been a silent listener to the conversation, "that Mrs. Wheeler told him last evening that you were welcome to practise on her piano if you wished. She said you would be apt to get rusty in your music if you had nothing to practise on."

"What! the miller's wife? Has she a piano in that pigeon-box she lives in?"

"It was a pigeon-box large enough to hold your mother," said Aunt Hesba, grimly; "do not forget that she was born there, and always lived there until she married your father."

"I expect it is some old tin pan of an affair," said Caroline, ignoring her aunt's remark; "some old-fashioned thing they have picked up second-hand to



bring out here, thinking to astonish the neighborhood."

"I am no judge of pianos, Caroline, as you well know," said her mother; "but Mrs. Wheeler makes good music on it. I know enough to know that."

"What! does she play?" said Caroline, with awakened interest,—*"the miller's wife!"*

"If it had been summer-time, and the doors all open, there would have been no need to have asked that question; and being a miller's wife need not prevent her knowing A from B," said her aunt.

"No," said Caroline, retreating a little from her position; "but it is a wonder she married a miller."

"Your father is not a miller, I suppose?" remarked Aunt Hesba, dryly.

"Father owns the mill, and hires a miller," replied Caroline, with marked emphasis.

"It was very kind in Mrs. Wheeler to make the offer, at any rate," said Mrs. Levering, soothingly; "you ought to go down and thank her, dear."

"She has never called on me," said Caroline, with curling lip; "I shall wait for that."

"Well, I hope you will have to wait a while," said Aunt Hesba, as she arose to leave the room. "Do be a sensible girl, Caroline, if you can; put on your bonnet this afternoon and go down there, and not wait for such nonsense here as a first call."

"I do think Aunt Hesba grows more disagreeable every day," remarked her niece, as Hesba withdrew from hearing, "and I still say that it is strange that the miller's wife plays the piano."



"I do not know why her husband's occupation should make a difference in that way," replied her mother, mildly. "But Mr. Wheeler was not always a miller; he was book-keeper in the city when he married Mrs. Wheeler."

"And how did he happen to get out here with father?" asked Caroline, who, having read everything she had brought home in her trunk, was, for lack of something to interest her, prolonging the conversation.

"He learned the milling business when a boy; his health had not been very good for some time, and he thought it might be better here. He has friends in Dorton who sent him word that your father wanted a change of millers; Mr. Wheeler came out to see about it, and your father employed him."

"His wife must be a strange creature to be contented here."

"She has her household duties to take an interest in; a sweet little daughter, Annette, and the baby,—both great company for Archie,—and just now has a little nephew of Mr. Wheeler's visiting there."

It was evident that Mrs. Wheeler knew what etiquette required of her; for a few days after Caroline's conversation in regard to her she called, card-case in hand, and clad in a neat and becoming toilet. Caroline could not help being pleased with her gentle, self-possessed neighbor, and had thought that enough time had elapsed to return the visit, when Aunt Hesba ventured again to ask her to accompany her to church at Dorton. A preacher was visiting round at different



churches, and although that of Dorton came on his list of a week-day, and one of Aunt Hesba's busiest days at that, she never thought of missing such an opportunity, and to her pleased surprise Caroline accepted the invitation, and accompanied her.

After church, Aunt Hesba lingered to shake hands with the minister and to chat with old friends, and Caroline, impatient at the delay, set out for home alone. Her reflections were not cheerful as she walked along. She had only gone to church to kill time, and the benefit derived from the services was slight indeed.

She was startled from the revery into which she had fallen by a scream of terror, and looking towards the dam, above the mill, she saw a small boy disappear beneath the water, while several terrified comrades stood on the bank helpless to render assistance. Throwing aside bonnet and gloves in her rapid flight, Caroline rushed to the bank, plunged into the smooth, clear water, and swam swiftly towards the drowning boy. Twice he sank and rose, and was disappearing for the third time when Caroline grasped him.

"Don't," she cried, sharply, as the boy strove to clasp her about the neck; "I will save you if you do not hinder me. If you drag me under, we will both drown."

Holding him on one arm, she grasped the boat from which he had fallen, and resting her other arm upon it assisted him into it, and, after waiting a moment to recover breath, struck out for the shore, taking the boat with her.



She had not been in the water for several years; the weight of her clothing retarded her motion, and she was weary from her walk; but she was a fearless and expert swimmer, she was determined to save the boy, and she did save him. Almost exhausted she reached the shore, where stood Mrs. Wheeler, pale and anxious,—having seen the whole occurrence from her window,—the boy being her husband's nephew.

In a gush of gratitude Mrs. Wheeler clasped the shivering girl to her breast, and besought her to go with them to the cottage, which was nearer than her own house; but Caroline declined, and with rapid steps crossed the meadow, and in a few moments reached home. Kind and anxious hands removed wet clothing; heating drinks were administered; comfortable beds received rescuer and rescued. The evening which Caroline had expected to pass drearily as usual was a pleasant one, happier than she had spent since her return to her father's house.

The next evening Caroline walked down to see the boy. His unexpected bath had been no benefit to him; he was flushed with fever. Caroline offered to spend the night with them if she could be of any use, an offer which Mrs. Wheeler gladly accepted, and word was sent up to the house not to expect her home until morning.

The little patient was not ill enough to require much attention, so Caroline and Mrs. Wheeler sat by the cottage fire and talked the live-long night. The offer of the use of the piano was renewed, and accepted by Caroline, who was charmed with the really fine instrument,



and also Mrs. Wheeler's sweet and plaintive style of playing upon it.

"It was a gift from a dear friend, and quite a romantic love-affair was connected with it. Would you like to hear it?" said Mrs. Wheeler, smilingly.

"Indeed I would," replied Caroline, "and there is no better time than the present."

"I will commence at the very beginning," said Mrs. Wheeler, "and, as I never like to be the heroine of my story, if agreeable to you I will speak of myself in the third person instead of the first."

"Agreed," said Caroline, gayly; "I am all attention."

Mrs. Wheeler went in the adjoining room to take a look at the sick boy, and found him sleeping quietly; replenished the wood fire on the hearth, set a plate of apples and biscuits on the little table between Caroline and herself, and commenced her story.

"'There's a lady in the parlor, ma'am. Shall I tell her ye'll be coming down presently, or tell her you are sick, an' to come some other time?'"

"'Do you think she wishes to see me particularly, Bridget, or is it only a call?'"

"'She didn't say, ma'am. She is nice an' quiet-like, an' just axed for the mistress of the house.'"

"'Well, tell her I will see her as soon as I can,' said Mrs. Wheeler, rising slowly from her recumbent position and languidly proceeding to bind up her disordered hair. 'Oh, dear, I feel so sick! I am not able to stand. Go down, Bridget, and ask her to please send up her name.'"



“‘She is after the place, ma’am,’ said Bridget, returning in a moment. ‘She says she saw your advertisement and thought she might suit, for she knows all about housework; an’ ye’d better take her, ma’am,’ added Bridget, confidentially, “for she’s nice an’ nate-spoken, an’ you know I must lave you this evenin’, an’ ye’er not fit to be left.’

“Poor Mrs. Wheeler felt the force of this reasoning. She had been suffering all day with sick headache, and at that particular moment felt that her head was a revolving wheel, performing its evolutions so swiftly that it gave her no time to think; but in the whirl she caught the words ‘nice and nate-spoken,’ and they sounded pleasant and soothing to her ear. Her kind-hearted but inefficient half-grown help had answered the call of her widowed mother to ‘come home and nurse the sick childer,’ and after the early tea was over she was to depart.

“Mrs. Wheeler had held a levee for several days past, hoping to get some one competent to fill that important niche in the household economy, the kitchen. She had asked and answered questions time about until she felt like a walking catechism, for you see it was somewhat difficult for one placed just as she was to get help that suited. She could not offer high wages, for her husband was only a clerk on a limited salary,—a very limited one, by the way, when one considered that everything had to come out of it; and she, poor little woman! had been trained by an indulgent mother who preferred doing the housework herself, foolishly arguing that her daughter’s troubles would come soon enough. Then



in the experience gained by her six months' siege of housekeeping she erroneously imagined that poor help was the cheapest, so never had any one from whom she could learn anything. By dint of economy she bought a recipe-book, determined to learn to cook; but never having heard of our good Marian Harland and many others, whose directions any child could understand and profit by, purchased one in which the quantities were on so large a scale and the qualities so gorgeous that she derived but little aid and comfort from it. And oh, dear! she sometimes thought her husband was to be pitied for uniting himself to such a useless piece of creation as herself. Dearly as she loved him and her little home, she almost wished she was not married at all, but was back again with her mother and he coming to see her as in the old happy days of courtship.

"She never knew before that she was so exacting and hard to please; but out of the avalanche of applicants of almost every nation, age, and color, the post was as yet unprovided for. Sick at heart, she had resolved not an hour back that, let the next applicant be a representative of the frigid North or torrid South, Ethiopian, Chinese, Crete, or Arabian, she would take her and make the best of her, and here was her chance.

"But in the mean time, here was Bridget, standing in the middle of the close and darkened room, and there was Mrs. 'What's-her-Name' in the parlor below, both waiting for the verdict, and she must come to a decision, so she said, slowly, 'Tell her to stay, Bridget, and I will come down as soon as I can.' Nothing loath, her handmaid briskly departed, and in the shortest possible



time had the 'lady in black' switched off to her room in the attic to lay aside her bonnet.

"'An' what may one be after calling ye, ma'am?' she asked, respectfully, as they at last reached the bare and comfortless apartment which in the Wheeler house was occupied by the 'help.'

"'You may call me Mrs. Grey, for that is my name,' replied the new-comer, gently, as she laid her bonnet on a chair, the only article of furniture the room contained, except the dreary-looking bed and Bridget's little old trunk.

"'Sure, an' I must go down now, for the mistress is after wanting a cup of tay; she axed me for it before you come at all, an' because I went out this afternoon the desaving fire must go out too, an' I was just puttin' some water in a tin cup over some shavens to save time like as you ringed.'

"Mrs. Grey excused her, and then with a heavy heart took a view of her surroundings; being few, it was not a difficult thing to do. While she stands there we will take a glance at her, hoping we will find more to interest us than the apartment afforded her.

"We see a slight but well-developed figure, a little below the medium height, apparently between twenty-five and thirty years of age. The abundant and lustrous hair, brushed smoothly back from the low, broad forehead, matched well the mild brown eyes; a fair, blooming complexion, a sweet, winning countenance, little dimples playing hide-and-seek around the rosy lips, and above all the halo of dainty neatness; and this woman had applied for the situation of housemaid.



“Why?

“Because, blessed with a good mind and an excellent education, she had as yet been unable to make them available so far as concerned the filling of her empty purse. Poverty was the shadow that followed her down-sittings and her uprisings, so she called her stand-by, common sense, to her aid, and was endeavoring to follow her suggestions.

“Left a widow three years before, the memory of her short and happy married life was like the glow of the setting sun before a storm. Since her husband’s death she had tried the few avenues for earning a livelihood open to women; had experimented upon teaching, but her warm woman’s heart would have her favorites; she could not help petting and praising the bright and obedient ones; neither could she help being intolerant to the dull and disobedient; therefore she earned the name, and not without cause, of being partial, a crime in the eyes of parents whose children were not the objects of favoritism; consequently she was unpopular. She was conscientious, also; was always at war with herself, fearing those intrusted to her care did not improve as fast as was expected, which opened her eyes to the fact that teaching was not her vocation; it wore her out body and mind.

“Then she tried to earn her living by her needle, but with the usual result of so sedentary a life,—she became nervous and irritable; she longed to be up and doing, to feel that she was accomplishing something; her thoughts flew faster than her needle, and neither thoughts nor needle brought her the comforts of a



home. She also tried clerkship in a store, but it happened to be one of those where the clerks were expected to be upon their feet all the time. The standing all day kept her from sleeping at night from weariness and pain; so, like her former plans, she tried clerkship in the balance and found it wanting.

“But there was an occupation she made up her mind to try, whereby she was sure she could support herself, and that was housework. She loved it; to her it was never monotonous; how could it be when it embraced nearly every trade and occupation under the sun, ‘brewer and baker and candlestick-maker,’ with a spice of the arts and sciences thrown in? She knew that being mistress in one’s own house and maid in somebody else’s were two different things, but every situation in life has its trials, and this had pleasures for her that no other possessed. It would be a change for her, give her new and varied experiences.

“She had seen life in the station in which she had moved, and learned much of it; she was now prepared to make her experience available. She would enter different homes. Seeing both sides of the picture, her knowledge of human nature would be deeper and broader; she would gain a victory over self by giving up a shadow for a substance,—the shadow, a false shame at the humble position, the substance, a comfortable, respectable home without the anxieties attendant upon the procuring of it.

“And to do our little Mrs. Grey justice, we must mention that she had a more unselfish motive in taking this step than to provide for herself the necessaries of



life, although, of course, not in so great a degree. She wished, as far as lay in her power, to aid others who, like herself, were dependent upon their own exertions to lay aside the prejudices attached to household service. She saw that milliners' rooms and stores and factories were thronged with applicants for something to do, while the occupation they were best fitted for was at their doors, but they bade it pass by. She would let her light shine that some one, attracted by it, might be encouraged to go and do likewise. She did not expect her servile experience to be all sunshine; life and its vicissitudes had taught her better than that; but oh! at the very outset, this bedroom was more than she had bargained for.

“In all her varied experiences she had always looked forward at the close of a weary day to the rest and quietness and soothing influence of her pleasant room, where, surrounded by her comfortable rocking-chairs, her bright carpet, her books, her plants, her pictures, and all the little refinements that a cultivated woman will collect around her, let her circumstances be what they may, and utter despondency took possession of her and for a few moments weighed her down. She had passed the open doors of cheerful bedrooms, which appeared to be unoccupied, on her way to this den; the parlor was cosy and comfortable, and even handsome in its appointments; the hall and stairway neat, and suited to the modest habitation; why, then, was the housemaid's room alone to show the dross?

“When she had seen nursery-maids flitting about with their charges, and neat housemaids going their several



ways, it never occurred to her that they could be condemned to mount such weary flights of steps to attain so cheerless an abode, to spend what to her was her happiest time, her beloved after-supper hours. And, as in times past, when in tribulation, she called upon a good friend to come and comfort her, and that good friend was *contrast*; but she asked it now to reverse the manner of its comfort, and instead of pointing out her blessings, to show up her losses; and she sadly thought, if the comfortless couch were but pressed by the rosy form of her year-old daughter, whose lowly bed was clothed in the tender green of the sweet spring-time, how reconciled would she be to it, and to all the rest of her discomforts! how gladly would she welcome the repose it offered! And in this way *contrast* showed her that it was not in her surroundings, but in herself and the view she took of them, that her happiness consisted.

“Having put her hand to the plough, she would not turn back, at least she would prove all things and hold fast to that which was good; and, strengthened by this comforting conclusion, she descended to enter upon her duties.

“A person less experienced would have been struck with dismay at the appearance of that kitchen, which for the day had been under Bridget’s charge, but our little Mrs. Grey did not look at it in that light at all. She saw at a glance that it was lacking in none of the essentials required in the groundwork of a home. It was roomy and light, and all it needed was a deft hand to convert it in a marvellously short time into a cheery



and comfortable place, and her spirits rose accordingly. The presiding genius of the place was down on her knees in front of the range, blowing lustily at a few splinters which she had stuck in a grate full of dead coal in every stage of combustion.

“‘Sure, an’ it’s the fire that does be contrairy when I axes it to burn to make the mistress her tay,’ said she, lifting a pair of watery eyes to her co-laborer; ‘she’s been waitin’ so long for it, an’ she hasn’t tasted the bite to-day since breakfast; an’ it’s mighty short work she made of that same; an’ what with one thing an’ another, she’ll think it long a-comin’.’

“‘Poor woman!’ thought Mrs. Grey, ‘sick and wanting a cup of tea, and expecting it to come out of this chaos.’ And the dismal bedroom was forgotten as she set about making the refreshing beverage.

“‘You get some kindling for me, Bridget, and I’ll make the fire and get the tea,’ she said, briskly, and Bridget obeyed with alacrity. ‘And now,’ she added, pleasantly, as Bridget scattered her load in front of the range, ‘if you will just slip up into my room and get a calico wrapper you will see there, I will show you how to make a first-rate fire before you could say Betsy Bobbit.’

“The wrapper was brought, and, to Bridget’s open-mouthed wonder, slipped on over the neat black dress, immaculate white apron, and dainty collar and cuffs. It had no lining, was loose, and was donned in less time than it takes to tell it. The coal was turned out, the kindling lighted and laid in such a manner that it could not help burning if it tried, because intelligence



was brought to bear upon it, and, though deaf, dumb, and blind, it felt the power; a little fresh coal was added just under the griddle, the kettle set on, with no more water than was necessary, and then Mrs. Grey had time to take another look at her future home.

“ ‘What are all these unwashed dishes and pans piled up on this table for, Bridget, and these scales and sugar and recipe-book?’

“ ‘Oh, that is where the mistress was a-makin’ of the curran’-jelly. I could not help laughing, ma’am, an’ I was sorry for her, too, to see her worriting over that jelly. She was up wid the lark this mornin’, for she wanted to have some made an’ cool, to surprise Mr. Wheeler at dinner wid jelly of her own makin’, an’ she said it would be so nice to have when sickness comed into the house; an’ she picked every little stim off the curran’s, an’ she washed them through ever so many waters, an’ she weighed an’ weighed the sugar, an’ biled the jelly, an’ worried wid that same until she took the sick headache, an’ she sat down an’ cried jist when it was done an’ cold an’ she found she could nayther cut it wid a knife nor crack it wid a hammer.’

“ ‘It was boiled too much, Bridget,’ said Mrs. Grey, compassionately, for it called to mind the failures and weariness of her own early housekeeping days, and she could sympathize with the disappointments. The little episode gave her an insight to the character of her employer, and without having seen her, she judged her to be kind and affectionate, anxious to do her part in life as mistress of a home on a limited income, desirous of practising economy, and disheartened at waste.



"All this she told me afterwards, remember," said Mrs. Wheeler, with a little laugh.

Caroline nodded approvingly, and Mrs. Wheeler continued:

"By this time the water had boiled, and Mrs. Grey made the tea and a crisp slice of toast, spread a clean napkin on a waiter, doffed her wrapper, and professed her readiness to go up-stairs to be introduced. But from this proposition Bridget drew back, smiling, but abashed.

"‘Sure an’ it’s that same I never did in my life, an’ a pretty botch I’d make of it, but I will stay here, an’ bring the toast an’ tay up with the callin’.’

"Mrs. Grey’s gentle knock was answered by a feeble ‘Come in,’ and softly opening the door, she entered. The headache had abated, but pale and weak and with tears on her lashes, poor little Mrs. Wheeler was bearing her troubles as well as she could.

"Although knowing the imperfections of Bridget, she was used to her, and lay there dreading the time when she must descend and see a strange face in her kitchen; and here, the strange face had saved her the trouble by coming to see her; was standing by her bedside, a pleasant, cheery presence, looking at her with tender eyes; and after quietly giving her name, proceeded, without asking questions, to bathe the invalid’s face and hands in cool water, brush her hair back, turn the heated pillows, and then call according to order for the refreshments. And Mrs. Wheeler, refreshed and her mind at rest, praised the reviving tea and succulent toast by eating every bit of it and getting well forthwith.



“It is a difficult thing to negotiate when neither party will trust; but in this case no such obstacle presented itself. Preliminaries were soon settled, and at the end of the week Mrs. Wheeler was ready and willing to give up all management into the capable hands of Mrs. Grey; but as willing as the latter would have been to accept the charge, she felt she would be conferring a more lasting benefit upon her youthful employer by putting her in the way of managing for herself. She considered that no matter how capable ‘help’ are to manage, every woman should be mistress in her own house.

“She felt it not derogatory to her, to go to Mrs. Wheeler for orders; she had voluntarily assumed the position of housemaid; she would be no nondescript. Her platform was, to fulfil to the letter all that should be required of her, and to spend the leisure time she secured by her system of work, as best suited her. She was pleased and satisfied with her employers; she considered her lines had fallen in pleasant places. Although not blessed with much of this world’s goods, their home was on no sordid scale; books and the latest periodicals graced their centre-table; they were refined and cultivated, and she asked no more. (Mrs. Grey’s words, not mine, remember.)

“The kitchen underwent a regeneration; for Mrs. Grey felt that if her room could not afford her a pleasant resting-place, the kitchen must do double duty. Although she preferred, when her household duties were set aside, to turn her back upon them and forget them for a time, she possessed the happy faculty



of making the best of all things, and adapting herself to circumstances. So in a week the kitchen was as cosey a nook as any in the house. Hanging-baskets were flourishing in the sunny windows, rugs made of all sorts of discarded scraps dotted the white floor, her work-basket and books had possession of an out-of-the-way table, and neatness and comfort were the order of the day.

“But all these happy conclusions were not arrived at immediately. No, indeed. Mr. Wheeler, with masculine foresight and prudence, was doubtful and perplexed. He wondered that a lady of Mrs. Grey’s (he even queried if that was her name) appearance should go out to service. Visions of female burglars visited his pillow and disturbed his slumbers; but, like the wise man that he was, he kept his suspicions to himself. He resolved to be silent but watchful, and his watching was rewarded, for after a few weeks the minister’s wife, Mrs. Irene Getty, who had long known and loved her, called to see Mrs. Grey, and as Mrs. Grey was out shopping, she entertained Mrs. Wheeler with the excellencies of her dear friend. And then was John Wheeler ashamed of himself, and at last came to the sensible conclusion that his wife’s delicate instincts were worth a cart-load of his lumbering reasonings, and, fond, foolish fellow as he was, he told her so, for he had an old-fashioned notion that praise from a husband never yet spoiled a wife, and she was made glad and happy by it, and it was all owing to that good woman, Mrs. Grey.

“Out of her household goods she had saved such



articles as she prized most highly, and rented a room in which to store them. Now that she was anchored, why not, if all parties were willing, bring them there? And while she was deliberating, a sweet and lovely baby daughter was given to the delighted parents, and none rejoiced with them more sincerely than did Mrs. Grey. Notwithstanding the tender welcome the little one received, nothing could keep it from the more beautiful home whither it was tending, and in a short time it winged its flight and left them, oh, so desolate! Then who stood by the afflicted ones like Mrs. Grey; for had she not passed through the same fiery ordeal, and knew just how to comfort?

“As the evenings grew longer, and there was no infant to occupy her time, Mrs. Wheeler would, with a sinking heart, see her husband slip his flute in his pocket and depart, and she would steal down into the cosey kitchen for comfort; and though no questions were asked nor confidences given, Mrs. Grey could see the skeleton which would peep out of the Wheeler closet,—*i.e.*, the evenings at home were dull, and Mr. Wheeler would seek society elsewhere.

“‘For you see,’ said his poor little wife, ‘John is so fond of music, and I cannot play, and so of evenings he goes around to his uncle’s, and he and his cousins play duets on the flute and piano. I used often to go with him, but I could do nothing but sit still, and John thought I was dull and did not enjoy my evenings, so it shortened his visits, and when I noticed it, I made excuses for not going, and I can see he likes it better, although he feels badly about leaving me alone.’



"Then her listener felt encouraged to make a proposition :

" 'What is to hinder you from learning to play? I will teach you if you wish to learn. I am not a proficient certainly, but I pass for a good performer, and will teach you all I know.'

"And then these two laid their artful heads together, and planned and planned, and the result was that one of the pleasant rooms up-stairs was to be converted into a bedroom for Mrs. Grey ; and for the first time it occurred to Mrs. Wheeler that she might have had it all along, and Mrs. Grey knew her well enough to believe her.

"The next day, while Mr. Wheeler would be at the store, the piano and all the rest of her housekeeping relics were to be brought and put in that room, and Mrs. Wheeler was to commence taking lessons forthwith, and the crowning joy of all was that it was to be kept a secret to surprise her husband ; and then he came, and the conference ended.

"The next morning it was, 'Oh, Mrs. Grey, I could scarcely sleep for planning for to-day, and thinking how delighted John will be when he finds I can play. His birthday is in February ; do you think, if I try my best, I can play "Flow gently, sweet Afton," by that time? It was his mother's favorite piece, and he says it is so sweet on the piano accompanied by the flute.'

"Mrs. Grey thought she could ; in fact, was sure she could, 'For see, it is nearly five months off.'

"Mr. Wheeler was never so slow in starting as on that



momentous morning, but finally that important move was accomplished. The housework was all completed early, for on that morning, as on others, it was lightened by hearty co-operation and pleasant converse, as Mrs. Wheeler took an interest in learning all things, and, under the excellent tuition of Mrs. Grey, was becoming a good cook and housekeeper.

“The piano and all the rest were brought, and the room looked so homelike that it was hard to say which of the two women were the happier.

“Though neither of them possessed the voice of a prima-donna, nor was their music such as would have brought them greatness, yet it was sweet and homelike, and many a tender ballad and tuneful melody refused to consider its mission accomplished until it floated on the wings of the soft Indian-summer air to cheer some wayfarer on the street below.

“The birthday was drawing near, and on that day the piano was to find its way to the parlor, and the cousins were to come in the evening to help play the duets which they had been practising so secretly. There were cakes to be made, and dainties of all kinds, and the parlor to be trimmed with evergreens, and, oh, dear, what a happy, happy day it was to be!

“You begin to think it time for a gentleman to step upon the scene as a husband for Mrs. Grey, do you, Miss Caroline? Well, I suppose it is, but I have tried to keep him back, out of kindness to Mrs. Wheeler, who is a favorite of mine; but he would come, the handsome, middle-aged gentleman,—Mr. Wheeler’s eldest brother.

“Mrs. Wheeler unwittingly laid the train with her



own hands, for out of the fulness of her heart could she forbear filling her letters to relatives and friends with the exceeding merits of her dear friend, Mrs. Grey? And did not her bachelor brother-in-law pocket all he could lay hands on, and ponder over them to his heart's content?

“And what was the result? Why, on John Wheeler's birthday, for was not that a good excuse—as if he needed any—to visit his brother's house, who should step in to crown the general joy but Herman Wheeler? I shall not tell you how long he stayed, nor what he said; but this I will tell you, that one year from that very evening a wedding-party was assembled in the same parlor, and the bride was Mrs. Grey, and the groom was handsome Herman Wheeler.

“The good minister's wife was there; also the good minister's wife's husband, who tied the knot for the happy couple; and Mrs. Wheeler No. 1 played the Wedding March on her own piano, for Mrs. Wheeler No. 2 had whispered in her delighted ear, ‘I wish you would keep the piano, dear, for Herman has given me a piano for a bridal present, and I have no need of two.’”



## CHAPTER XVII.

## SEALED PROPOSALS.

“Life hath its harvest-moons,  
Its tasselled corn, and purple-weighted vine;  
Its gathered sheaves of grain,—the blessed sign  
Of plenteous ripening,—bread and pure, rich wine,  
Full hearts for harvest tunes.”

“CAROLINE,” said Mrs. Levering, one morning, as her daughter came in from a visit to the cottage, “there is a letter for you on the table in your room; it came enclosed in one to your father.”

“In a letter to father!” exclaimed Caroline, in surprise. “Who in the world wrote a letter to father and enclosed one in it to me?”

“Some one I am not acquainted with,” smiled Mrs. Levering; “but he appears to be a gentleman.”

“A gentleman!” Caroline’s face flushed with crimson light, and, turning, she bounded up the steps, and in a moment was in her room.

There it lay upon the table, a firm, manly-looking epistle, directed in a clear, educated business-hand. Caroline recognized it at a glance; knew every line and curve of the address; knew the seal; knew, in short, that it was a letter from Rev. James Ridgely, and no other.

But to her father,—why was that? She held it in



her hand; she pondered; she must still the throbbing of her heart before she drew the letter from its envelope; she must for a moment enjoy in anticipation that which she could at will make reality.

It could be but for one cause that Mr. Ridgely would write to her father, and that cause must be herself. Caroline was right. Mr. Ridgely had written to Archibald Levering asking permission to address his daughter, and win her for a wife if he could.

If there had been no letter in it for Caroline, it is doubtful if she would have ever heard from her father that he had received it. Mr. Levering would in all probability have quietly answered it, giving Mr. Ridgely liberty to do his own wooing, without any assistance from him; but in some way the letter enclosed was a bond of unity between him and his daughter; it touched some chord in his own blighted life which responded to the touch, and his heart warmed towards the unknown lover as though he had unwittingly turned a page of his own youth.

Although caring but little for the courtesies and etiquette of society, Archibald Levering was by nature a gentleman, and he appreciated this mark of respect from Mr. Ridgely far more than his daughter or any one else would have given him credit for. Therefore, when he gave the letter to Mrs. Levering to deliver to Caroline, he left the one addressed to himself with it; so Caroline had the whole story.

"To think he asked father first!" thought Caroline, flushing anew. "He thought father was a polished gentleman like himself or Uncle Harkness. What



will he think when he sees him? Oh, if father only would be a little more like other people!"

Mr. Ridgely's letter to Caroline was kind and friendly, but not lover-like. Having asked permission of her rightful guardian to address her as his future wife, he would wait until that permission was given before doing so. In the mean time, he told her of the news in social, literary, and religious circles; spoke of her uncle's family, and mentioned how much Caroline had been missed by all.

After reading her own and her father's letter several times, Caroline fell into a delightful reverie. Of course her father would give his consent, and it would result in her going back to St. Louis as the beloved wife of a popular minister. She saw herself presiding over the elegant home which she knew him to be able to possess, and her heart swelled high at the brilliant prospect.

Caroline felt a natural diffidence at meeting her father at dinner. She put off coming down as long as she could, and not until Hesba had sharply called her for the second time did she summon courage to answer the call. Her father had removed his coat and hung it upon its accustomed peg behind the door, and was already at the table. He did not look up when Caroline entered, for which she mentally thanked him, though she feared at the same time that it was an unfavorable sign as to his opinion of Mr. Ridgely and his proposition. The meal, as usual, was partaken of almost silently, and as soon as it was over Mr. Levering donned his coat and went back to the mill.



Caroline had that morning promised Mrs. Wheeler a book, and after tea, walked down to the cottage with it in her hand. Under the exhilarating influence of happiness how beautiful everything appeared to Caroline that evening, as she lightly trod the fresh young grass of the meadow which lay between her home and the cottage! How romantic and beautiful looked the hoary old mill in the rosy beams of the setting sun! how cheerily the birds were twittering their evening carols in the newly-leaved woods at the back of the cottage! how sweet and pure and lovely all things were! and yet, at the same hour last evening, how cold and dull and lifeless it had all appeared to her!

Mr. Levering was standing in the mill-door in his habitual attitude—bolt upright with his hands crossed behind him—as his daughter passed through the meadow a short distance from him. Her face flushed as she saw he was observing her, and a presentiment that he intended speaking to her quickened her steps away, though why it did so, she could not explain, even to herself. He reached for his cane, which always stood just within the mill-door when not in use, stepped down the three steps which led to the mill-yard, and went to meet her.

“Who is this James Ridgely, Caroline, who has written to me, enclosing a letter to you?” he asked, abruptly.

The question did not surprise Caroline, for in the evenings when she had condescended to entertain the home circle with any scraps of information in regard to her visit, although her father occupied his accus-



tomed place, he always appeared to be intently reading, and she did not know whether he caught any of the conversation or not. In these conversations Mr. Ridgely filled a prominent place, because he had been a prominent feature in her sojourn from home.

"He is a brother of Aunt Harkness, father," said she, gaining confidence; "is a minister, and has a fine church and congregation in St. Louis."

"An oldish man, I suppose," remarked her father.

"I do not think he is more than twenty-seven or eight. He is twenty years younger than Aunt Harkness, I once heard her say."

"I guess he is a fine man," said Mr. Levering, hesitatingly; "but——" Here he stopped. Caroline saw there was something on her father's mind to which he did not give utterance, but never imagined that it was sorrow at the prospect of her going away again; for Mr. Levering was one of those persons who pass through life with their hearts veiled from those who are nearest and dearest, therefore are misunderstood and unappreciated.

"But you will not refuse him, father?" said Caroline, putting her own construction on his hesitation; "you will answer his letter, giving your consent?"

"Yes, child, yes!" said her father, almost impatiently, as he turned away from his daughter and took the path back to the mill, while Caroline resumed her walk to the cottage.

Poor, lonely father! Oh, Caroline, was there no affectionate instinct in your heart which prompted you to give your father one caress or word of filial affec-



tion,—one token that he was dear to you, one sigh at the thought of separation?

Mr. Ridgely's letter was answered, and the correspondence between Caroline and himself was regular and frequent; but no word in regard to it passed between Mr. Levering and his daughter. At length one evening Caroline received a letter from Mr. Ridgely which set her to thinking and planning seriously. Mr. Ridgely had written that he would do himself the honor to pay her a visit the following month.

Caroline was a believer in first impressions, and she made up her mind that her lover should see her on her own ground under the most favorable circumstances possible, and these circumstances, she decided with her shallow reasoning, could not be found under her father's roof, but in the city home of her brother David's widow. Her resolution was soon taken, her plans completed. She wrote to her sister-in-law, thanking her for the first time for her many kind invitations, and telling her when she might expect her. From thence she intended writing to Mr. Ridgely, telling him she was visiting, and inviting him to meet her at the home of Mrs. Amanda.

"I am determined he shall not see my home this trip, anyhow," she said to herself, "and by the next time he comes I hope there will be a change."

Poor girl! by the next time there was a change, but not such as she had hoped for, but one which, with all her apparent heartlessness and real selfishness, bowed her to the earth in deep and sincere sorrow. The



answer from Mrs. Amanda Levering came promptly, giving her a cordial invitation to come any day, and expressing her pleasure that it had at length suited Caroline's convenience to pay her a visit.

Caroline was now delightfully busy. The handsome dresses given her by her aunt Harkness came now in use. Through her cousin Sylvia, she had kept herself familiar with the changes and vagaries of fashion, and set cheerily about remodelling her wardrobe. Aunt Hester offered her assistance in the matter of doing up laces and muslins, and Caroline gladly accepted the offer.

There was to all this anticipated pleasure, however, the inevitable drawback, the old carriage; she was compelled to go in that or stay at home. But in such a case as the present she was willing to risk a little damage to her pride for the sake of the object in view; besides, she thought of a way in which, if she could get her father to acquiesce, all mortifications in regard to the carriage and his antiquated appearance might be in a measure obviated.

She knew that her father stopped always, in his rare visits to the city, at a farmers' hotel to have his horse fed. This hotel was in a respectable but unfashionable part of the town. She thought she could manage, without her father suspecting her motive, to induce him to let her alight there, and walk to her sister-in-law's, and Mrs. Amanda could send for the trunk when convenient. Wardrobe completed and plans laid, Caroline set out on her visit.

"Where do you intend stopping, father, when we get



into town?" she said, as the spires of the Monumental City came in sight. "I am not in the least hurry to get to Amanda's, as she does not know exactly when to expect me, so I will go around with you first."

"I want to call at Lawyer Dubreuil's office a little while, and one or two other places; but first, I will have the horse fed at the 'Golden Sheaf,' and, as they keep carriages there to run to the depot and other places, I thought I would hire one, and send you and the trunk up to Amanda's; that will save me from going, and I can get home earlier."

Oh, no! Archibald Levering was no dunce. If he had not been entirely satisfied in his own mind that he was doing precisely what Caroline most desired, her sudden rise in spirits and inability to conceal her pleasure at the proposal, would have convinced him. Before they drew up at the ladies' entrance of the hotel it was noticed that Caroline's blue veil was in demand, and her backwardness and evident desire to avoid attracting attention were beautiful to behold.

Her father procured the carriage at once, and in the shortest possible time she had bidden her father good-by, had been provided with a more liberal supply of money than she had ever received at any one time from him, and was driven in fine style to the door of Mrs. Garrigue's boarding-house. Caroline was again in her element. How delightful appeared the handsomely-furnished rooms! How they brought back to her mind that lovely visit to St. Louis! Her sister-in-law received her cordially, and conducted her to a pleasant room adjoining hers, from which was a view of the street;



and after a chat, in which Archie formed a prominent feature, left to give Caroline an opportunity to dress for dinner.

"You came at a very opportune time," said she, as she was about leaving the room. "The Literary Society meets this evening in the parlor, and I know you will enjoy it; besides, you will be a valuable addition to the club."

Caroline felt as though stepping on air, so jubilant, so happy was she; everything gave promise of a charming visit.

"Then I will dress again for evening, shall I not?" she inquired, eagerly.

"You can use your pleasure altogether about that," smiled Mrs. Amanda; "the ladies generally don something light for evening, but it is entirely optional. As you know, I wear nothing but black."

"And very becoming as it is to any one, it is more so to you," said Caroline, sincerely.

Evening came, and the members of the club were all present, with the usual number of guests, and Caroline thought she never saw so many agreeable and intelligent persons in one house, while they on their part were charmed with the beauty and grace of Caroline.

Archie was watching for the return of his grandfather from the city very impatiently that evening. Strange that it had never occurred to any of them, not even to Archie himself, how conveniently he could have paid a visit to his mother and returned with his grandfather in the evening.

If Caroline had thought of it, she would have most



likely kept her thoughts to herself, as her manœuvres and calculations tended toward getting to her sister-in-law's without going in the old carriage, and Archie's going would have upset all her plans. As for Archie, he was so full of a little scheme of his own that even the pleasure of a visit to the city did not occur to him. The moment he saw the old gray horse turn of its own accord into the familiar lane he ran to open the gate, and set it wide for him to pass through.

"Did you see mother, grandfather?" he said, eagerly, as he commenced mechanically to help unharness the old gray.

"No, Archie, I did not go up to the house; I sent your aunt Caroline up in a hack."

Archie was a manly little fellow, but a chill of bitter disappointment ran over him, and tears filled his large brown eyes. His grandfather noticed it, and felt for the boy. "Did you want to see her so badly, Archie? You did not say anything about it before I went."

"I did not know you could do any other way than go yourself," replied Archie, vainly striving to control his voice. "I wanted you to see mother and grandmother and the baby and all, and tell me how they all looked, and if they missed me; and besides, I wrote a note to mother, and sent it by Aunt Caroline."

"Caroline did not say a word to me about it, but that will make no difference; she will give it to your mother as soon as she gets there."

"Yes; but it would be of no use. Wednesday of next week is Annette Wheeler's birthday, and I wrote to mother to get me something nice for my present to



her and send it by you. I know mother would have got the very nicest thing she could."

"I am really sorry about it," said Mr. Levering, compassionately. "How would it do to give Annette some money, and let her buy whatever suits her?" he added, looking furtively around, as though afraid of being detected in doing a kindness.

"Oh, I don't think she would like that at all," replied the boy; "but thank you all the same, grandfather."

"Well, then, I am afraid I cannot help you any; maybe your grandmother or Aunt Hesba could help you. Women know more about such things than men."

"Yes, sir; but I asked them before, and it was grandmother who first put it into my head to write to mother, and send the letter by Aunt Caroline."

"Your aunt Caroline did not know what was in the note, I suppose, or she would have told me," remarked Mr. Levering, reflectively.

"Oh, yes, sir, she knew; but I expect she forgot it."

"I could get some boy that brings grain to mill to catch you a rabbit or squirrel alive for her, and she could have it for a pet."

"Oh, that will be the very thing! How kind you are, grandfather! I know that will please Annette better than anything I could buy."

"Your uncle Jonas has a nice cage with a reel for a squirrel. We will ask him to sell it to you; and I will paint it over, and it will look like new."



Mr. Levering did not forget his promise, and as Timothy happened to be the first boy who came afterward to the mill, Timothy it was who engaged to catch the squirrel. He was fortunate in getting a beauty, with bright eyes and bushy tail, and Jonas Levering willingly gave the cage. Mr. Levering painted it in fancy style, and Archie's present was complete.

Annette's birthday happened upon a school holiday, which Archie and she decided was the very luckiest thing that ever happened. His grandmother also gave him permission to stay from school the afternoon before, as Mrs. Wheeler was to take Annette and himself to search in the woods for crowfoot and evergreens to decorate the cottage, in honor of the birthday. Mrs. Wheeler knew all about the present Archie had prepared for Annette, and felt really grateful to Mr. Levering for his kindness; yet her insight into his nature would have kept her from alluding to it in his presence even had she the opportunity.

Archie and Annette helped make the birthday cake, Archie having brought the ingredients from the village store in his dinner-basket, and as soon as the frugal supper was over, to which he had obtained permission from home to remain, the grand business of decorating began. They had just finished, and were admiring the effect, when a little knock was heard on the door, and Hesba, with a shawl over her head, came in. A carriage-load of visitors were up at the house, and she had come for Archie.

Hesba was a little flustered by her speedy walk, and was in a hurry back; but she could not help but



exclaim at the beauty of the room, albeit she was not much given to praise. The pure white walls gleamed through the lovely clinging foliage, while here and there scarlet berries added to the effect.

Hesba had not informed Archie who the visitors were; in fact, she had not the time, for he was off in a flash, and in less time than it takes to tell it was in the arms of his mother. In the mean time, Hesba stayed long enough to inform Mrs. Wheeler who the visitors were, then followed Archie to the house.

Caroline's enjoyment of her visit did not fall an iota short of her expectations, which is more than can be said of most pleasures in this life. Mr. Ridgely came at the appointed time, and stopped at a hotel in the neighborhood of the Garrigue boarding-house. As in St. Louis, he came often to take Caroline out for a drive. Sometimes he came with a double-seated carriage, and invited Mrs. Garrigue and Mrs. Amanda to accompany them in long drives out in the country. He stayed over the Sabbath, and preached at one of the most noted churches in the city; several of the ladies and gentlemen of the house went to hear him, and their appreciation of his discourse was sweeter than music to the ear of his affianced; for he had offered himself to Caroline and had been accepted.

"Miss Caroline," remarked Mr. Ridgely, one morning while sitting in the parlor of the Garrigue boarding-house, "I must return to St. Louis the last of next week; but I shall not feel satisfied to leave here until I have called to pay my respects to your father and mother. Living, as they do, within driving distance



of the city, I feel it would be inexcusable in me to make no effort to see them. We will go any day you may appoint, and we will be most happy to have Mrs. Levering accompany us," bowing to Mrs. Amanda, who was present.

"I shall be delighted to go," said Mrs. Levering, quickly, to cover Caroline's chagrined silence. "I have, as you are aware, a son out there, and am so glad to have the opportunity of going, particularly at this time, as he wrote by his aunt Caroline for me to attend to some little matters for him; but as his grandfather could not make it suit to call that day, I could not send what he wrote for."

"Let me see," said Caroline, reflectively, mentally resolving to put it off long enough to send the home-folks a line, "this is Saturday; the birthday is next Wednesday. How would it do to go on Tuesday and spend the day?"

"Whatever suits you, ladies," said Mr. Ridgely, courteously; "I am entirely at your service."

"Or would it not be better to go on Tuesday evening and come back Wednesday morning," said Mrs. Amanda, who longed to spend an evening with her son.

Caroline agreed; for she ran it quickly over in her mind that if there was any circumstance under which the dreary, bare old parlor at home, with its striped, home-made wool carpet, rush-seated chairs, and white muslin curtains, was endurable, it was when lighted up by a roaring hickory fire; and if there were any fair side to the picture, she wanted Mr. Ridgely to see it.



The reverend gentleman's coat-tails had scarcely disappeared through the hall-door that morning, before Caroline flew up-stairs, wrote a letter home, and slipping out, took it herself to the nearest letter-box. She directed it to her aunt Hesba, because Archie, who would call at the post-office on his way home from school on Monday and receive the letter, would be less apt to ask Aunt Hesba its contents than if received by his grandmother ; at all events, he would be less likely to hear them, supposing he did ask, so to Hesba it was sent.

Caroline did not mention even to Mrs. Amanda that she had written, and took the precaution to mention to her aunt and mother that she had not done so. "It will not be necessary for any of you to mention to Mr. Ridgely and Amanda that I gave you notice," she added, and underscored, "then any changes you make will not be known as changes ; and, above all, don't tell Archie," this latter clause with marked emphasis.

"It will prevent us catching mother with her everyday cap on," she thought to herself as the letter dropped into the box, "and Aunt Hesba knitting at a stocking a yard long, and father in his shirt-sleeves, and the dining-room littered up with bits of leather and strings and other traps, which Archie has around him with his everlasting covering of balls." So they went, and Archie was clasped in his mother's arms.

Now that they were really in her father's house, Caroline was surprised that she should have dreaded it, everything was passing along so excellently. How



bright and comfortable looked the old-fashioned parlor in the blaze of the crackling fire, which had been kept there all day ! for, although spring had far advanced, the evenings were very cool, and Caroline offered a devout thanksgiving in consequence.

It is doubtful, if Archie had not been taken up by the birthday festival, whether he could have been kept in ignorance of the unusual preparations going on at home ; but he was at school all morning and at the cottage all the afternoon, and the only time he had been in the house that day was to eat his dinner, and his aunt and grandmother took particular care that nothing likely to attract his attention should be about just at that time. Hesba made one of her choicest poundcakes, and dressed the finest poultry on the place, and Mrs. Levering did her share of getting all in readiness unknown to Archie. As to the fire in the parlor, it could have burned there a month, and Archie have been none the wiser. The parlor was a spot which Archie did not affect. Its every-day funereal aspect chilled the boy to the marrow of his bones, and his visits to it were like those of angels,—few and far apart. He thought it the dreariest place on earth, and so it was, until lighted and warmed by the rollicking fire, which glorified every nook and angle, and made diminutive twin images of itself in the eyes of the happy circle around it.

Caroline could see that her father was pleased with Mr. Ridgely, and, what was far more important in her eyes, that Mr. Ridgely was equally pleased with her father. In all her remembrance of Archibald Levering she had never seen him take a real interest in conver-



sation before. As for her mother, anybody that suited Caroline would suit her.

Archie was in his favorite position, on a stool at his mother's side, his arm resting on her lap and hers around him, while Mrs. Levering and her daughter-in-law dropped naturally into the subject so dear to both, that of the loved and lost,—Archie's dead father. Mrs. Amanda was so grateful to the grandparents for the good home they had given her boy; so glad to see him well and happy.

Caroline, seeing all so happily interested, went out to chat with her aunt, who was putting the finishing touches on the supper. The long drive had given each an excellent appetite, and Archie was reminded of his first evening there, when he saw the estimation in which his aunt's broiled chicken and excellent bread and coffee were held.

As soon as Mrs. Amanda had arrived that day and laid aside her wrappings, she had given Archie the presents his grandmother Garrigue and herself had bought for him, also a handsome wax doll as a present for Annette, and a picture-book and puzzle to amuse both,—the latter being Archie's present to Annette. The visitors had intended going back to the city the next morning, but were so cordially invited to stay to dinner that they consented, and Archie was permitted to invite Annette up to take dinner with them; so from beginning to end it was destined to be a perfect festival to the children.

After breakfast Archie accompanied his grandfather and Mr. Ridgely upon a walk down the creek, and Mr.



Ridgely was charmed with the romantic beauty of the place.

Considering the short time which elapsed between breakfast and dinner, it was amusing to note how many private little conferences took place between the little circle of entertainers and guests.

Mr. Ridgely had a few moments' private conversation with the parents of his betrothed, in which he affectionately thanked them for the confidence they reposed in him in giving him their only child, whereupon it was noticeable that Archibald was much affected, although for anything he possessed he would not have wished any one to have known it, while Mercy smiled unmoved, with her usual placid sweetness. Mrs. Amanda also had a few minutes' private conversation with the parents of her deceased husband, to which Mr. Levering listened immovably, while Mercy's eyes filled with tears. Perhaps it concerned Archie, perhaps not, but whether so or otherwise, it made not a shade of difference in their kindness toward her.

Caroline had a private chat with Aunt Hesba, in which she told of her engagement; also that Mr. Ridgely had received a call to the church he had preached in since his visit to her, that he intended accepting it, and they would be settled near Mrs. Amanda.

Archie had a private conference with his mother, in which he informed her in all sincerity that Annette Wheeler was the very prettiest girl in the whole world, and that he intended to marry her when he grew to be a man. Whereupon Mrs. Amanda smiled, and evinced a laudable curiosity to see the little maid; and when An-



nette appeared at dinner, a sweet, modest, well-behaved child, Mrs. Amanda smiled again, and thought to herself that if it should in time turn out as Archie had planned, her consent should not be hard to gain.

Caroline had also a few seconds' private conversation with her mother, in which she hurriedly whispered, "Don't let Aunt Hesba put any wine on the dinner-table, or hint that she makes it."

Yes, it was a delightful visit to all, and to none more than Hesba, for Mr. Ridgely had inquired into the state of the village church, and, finding it languishing, had interested himself in all the particulars. Once upon a time it had been in a flourishing condition, had a minister of its own, and a parsonage; but a new church had been built in a larger village, several miles away, and now it was only at chance times that service was held, and the parsonage had for many years been occupied by different mechanics who had successively moved into the village. Mr. Ridgely had money, and he had influence; he resolved to use both in an endeavor to bring about a better state of things; and his prayer in the home circle that night seemed to Hesba to hold in it a comforting hope for the future. Nothing had endeared Archie more to her than his willingness to accompany her across the lonely fields to prayer-meeting, and she longed for this change as much for Archie as for herself.

The dinner was over, and, to Aunt Hesba's secret satisfaction, was a perfect success; and the guests returned to the city. Mrs. Amanda had embraced her mother-in-law more tenderly than even usual with her,



and with tears in her lovely eyes besought Mr. Levering to bring her to the city for a good long visit.

"It would do mother so much good," she said; "she needs a change."

For Mrs. Amanda had noticed what perhaps none of the rest had given a thought to,—not Mr. Ridgely, for it was his first time of seeing her; not her own family, for they were with her all the time,—she noticed that her mother-in-law was failing rapidly. She sorrowfully observed the languid step, the hurried breathing after the least exertion, the hollow eyes, and wan cheek. Yes, Mercy Levering's time on earth was short, and no one was more conscious of it than Mercy herself.

The evening before Mr. Ridgely's departure for the West was that of the semi-monthly meeting of the Garrigue Literary Society, and it was a subject of congratulation that he had so timed his visit as to be a guest of the club. Every member, with an invited guest, was present, and after Lawyer Dubreuil had called the meeting to order he remarked, blandly,—

"It has always been one of my favorite maxims that 'Variety is the spice of life;' so we will substitute something different, in place of the charades and tableaux. Our honored guest, the Rev. Mr. Ridgely, will address us for a few moments, after which our readings will proceed as usual."

The president, having excused himself, withdrew, and the conversation became general.

"That is because there is a minister present, I suppose," said Dr. Seneca Watts, in a low tone.



"What is because there is a minister present?" asked the law student.

"Why, having no charades nor tableaux nor nothing," said Dr. Seneca, discontentedly.

"Did you not hear him say that Mr. Ridgely was going to fill in with an address?"

"Yes; but that need not drive all the fun out of doors. I had a splendid tableau for this evening, costume and scenery and all."

"What was it?" inquired the law student.

"Why, a wedding; and now it has to be all set aside."

At that moment the parlor-door opened, and after a hush of expectation Mr. Ridgely arose and advanced to the centre of the room. The company followed his example, and arose in a body, as Lawyer Dubreuil, with Mrs. Amanda Levering on his arm, advanced slowly to the spot where Mr. Ridgely awaited them, and who began immediately to address them in the words that bound them together. Very sweet and lovely looked Mrs. Amanda in her soft dove-colored silk and floating veil; and as for the little lawyer, he never looked so well in all his life.

"Did you ever?" murmured Dr. Seneca, almost overwhelmed with astonishment, when the ceremony was over.

"No, I never!" muttered the law student.

"I don't like such sudden surprises," said Dr. Seneca, with the traditional shake of the head which has been the stock in trade of the disciples of Æsculapius ever since there were disciples; "they are injurious to the nerves."



Congratulations of the happy pair became general, and smiles and good wishes were on every side.

"Well, my dear sir," remarked the happy groom, as the law student advanced, "I believe I succeeded in giving you a surprise; I hope it was a pleasant one."

"But how in the world did you keep it such a secret? I am sure not one of us suspected such a thing," said the secretary.

"We did not do so intentionally," replied the bride, smilingly. "You did not ask us, and we did not care to go out of our way to tell you."

"It goes to prove, however," said Mr. Kemp, "that there are exceptions to all rules, and that all boarding-houses are not given to gossiping."

"Because we have so much pleasanter ways of spending our time; we really have no time to gossip," said Miss Sally, his daughter.

The club received another surprise when the doors of the dining-room were thrown open and disclosed refreshment-tables groaning under the weight of splendid fruits, ices, and other luxuries, while the bride's cake was a marvel of beauty, and all agreed that it was the most delightful wedding they had ever attended; no formality nor restraint, yet sufficient solemnity to keep all present in remembrance that two members of the society had entered into a solemn covenant which would end only with life.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## SHADOW AND SUNLIGHT.

“Dear eyes, that looked so kindly down on me,  
In whose clear light my inmost thoughts shone plain.  
Gone from me now, so far, so utterly,  
That they shall never smile on me again.”

ONE evening, six years after Timothy had come to Mrs. Carleton's, he set out for the residence of Mr. Bryor. He was now seventeen years of age. The foxy color of his hair had changed to a rich auburn; his freckles had disappeared; the bloom of health was on cheek and lip,—Timothy was a well-developed, handsome, intelligent youth.

He passed the place where Grace Darling had lost her life. He paused and reflected, as he had done many times before. It had always been a mystery to him what had become of her body, but he never alluded to her in the presence of Mr. Bryor, for he felt that he was in some way connected with her disappearance. He went on, and reached the house at the usual time. Margery, the old servant, was busy in the kitchen. He passed the door of the parlor, which he had never known unlocked, and entered the library, where Mr. Bryor and himself passed their evenings. The fire burned cheerily on the hearth, the lamp was lighted, and all things wore their usual look of refined



comfort. In his wonted place sat Mr. Bryor, but he turned not to greet his pupil. Mr. Bryor was dead. Like the master of "*Ogilvie's Pride*," he had passed away while his friends were supposing him to be in perfect health. For the second time the angel of death had removed one of Timothy's friends and neighbors silently and without warning.

The day before the funeral Timothy received a summons to the house of death. In the unused parlor sat the attorney of the late owner of the mansion, and with him were the brother and niece of the deceased. They and Timothy were the only mourners. The lawyer proceeded to read the last will and testament of Mr. Bryor. All bonds, stocks, and mortgages were bequeathed to his only brother's only child, Isabel; but the farm and dwelling which he had occupied, with all they contained, were left without reservation to Timothy. "Especially to my beloved pupil, Timothy, I bequeath, with my blessing, the statue concealed by a curtain in one corner of this room."

Timothy made no move toward it, so the lawyer advanced and drew aside the folds of crimson brocade. On a marble pedestal stood *Grace Darling*, as lifelike as though her taxidermist had been endowed with more than human skill.

"Oh, papa," cried Isabel, "it is my dog, my little *Flora*! See, papa, there is my monogram on her collar!"

The father had recognized the dog at a glance. When Isabel was a child it had been her pet, and about the time of his removal from the brownstone front, was lost. Neither Richard Bryor nor his daugh-



ter, however, had any more intention of disputing the possession of it, than they had of the farm which they had just heard bequeathed to Timothy. The city news-boy was now a land-owner, and his fine farm adjoined that of his steadfast friend, Mrs. Carleton, and Mrs. Carleton it was to whom he went for counsel as to the first move he should make on the checker-board of his new life.

“Clem Pierson and his wife want to move on a farm this spring,” said this clear-sighted friend. “Prudence is tired of living in the village. Keep Clem to farm your place, and let them occupy part of the house. Prudence is something of a shrew, but she is managing and capable, and will keep things comfortable about the place. By the time you are tired of that plan of farming you will be taking a wife, and will then have another adviser,” she concluded, with a smile, to which the boy responded.

“Then if I succeed in keeping Mr. Pierson,” replied Timothy, “I would occupy the other part of the house and board with them. Was that your idea?”

“Exactly. It would be rather undignified for the owner of a better farm than mine to continue as heretofore, and I congratulate myself on having so good a neighbor.”

“Thank you very sincerely for that and for all the other kindnesses you have ever shown me.”

The years which had brought such changes to Timothy had also brought changes to his neighbors and friends.



Mrs. Mercy Levering had been laid in her grave in the church-yard belonging to the little church in Dorton. Very quietly and peacefully she had passed away ; fit ending to the inoffensive and patient life ; and her death made but little change in the daily routine of the home from which she had been taken.

Mr. Ridgely and Caroline Levering were married a few months after her mother's death, and occupied the handsome parsonage belonging to the church over which he was pastor, and Mrs. Garrigue's boarding-house was in its usual flourishing condition.

Mrs. Amanda was a prompt correspondent, and her letters to Archie were frequent. It was one of Archie's many pleasures, these letters from his mother. He wanted all his friends to share his pleasure, so he had always given them to his grandparents and Aunt Hesba to read, and then took them to the cottage for Annette. It happened one morning that Mrs. Amanda had seated herself to write to her boy, when Caroline called in her handsome equipage to take her out for a drive,—on a shopping expedition for herself one may be sure, she wishing the benefit of her sister-in-law's excellent taste. Knowing she would be detained too late to mail her letter that day, she asked Mrs. Garrigue to write, that Archie might not be disappointed ; so for the first time in his life Archie received a letter written by his grandmother Garrigue.

After tea, the day in which this letter was received, Mr. Archibald Levering took his accustomed seat in the wide porch which faced the mill and the narrow grass-fringed path which led to Mr. Wheeler's cottage.



Down this path Archie was passing, having, as he went by his grandfather, laid the letter on his knee.

Archie had traversed but half the distance when something prompted him to turn. His grandfather had followed him, had overtaken him, and grasping him by the arm, said, with an expression upon his pallid face which Archie never forgot, "Archibald, what was your grandmother's name?"

"Martha Garrigue," replied the startled boy.

"But before she married—before she married,—did you never happen to hear any one mention it?"

"No," replied Archie, slowly; "I do not think I ever did."

Mr. Levering groaned. "Try and think, Archibald; I will give you time."

"Once, when I was a very little boy," said Archie, after a pause, "I was at grandma's, and she was dressing to go out. She let me look in her dressing-bureau. There was a little box in one of the drawers, and in it was a picture in a gold case with a name engraved upon it. I asked grandma whose name it was, and she told me to spell it and she would pronounce it for me."

"And it was——" said Mr. Levering, eagerly.

"Martha Rutlege."

"Martha Rutlege," repeated his grandfather, with quivering lips. "Oh, I knew it!"

"I did not know whose name that was," continued Archie. "Grandma said the picture was given her by a very dear friend."

"But did not say whom?" questioned his auditor.

"No, sir; but there was something else in the case,



and when I said the letters over, grandma said that was the name of the friend who gave it to her."

"What were the letters?"

"Let me think," said the boy, slowly; "yes, this is it: 'Martha Rutlege, from A. L.'"

"Did you see the picture?"

"Only for a moment; grandma took it and put it back in the box and locked it up in the drawer."

"Did it look like any one you knew?"

"No one that I know now. It was a young, handsome man, and I said to grandma that it looked like father."

"What did she say to that?" said Mr. Levering, leaning forward with intense interest to catch the answer.

"She turned suddenly around, drew me to her breast and kissed me, and told me not to mention to anybody that I had seen it, and I have never told any one until now. Perhaps I should not have done so even now."

For answer Mr. Levering turned, and with rapid steps sought his sister.

"Hesba!" rang his voice like a trumpet through the silent house.

Hesba came, her face like that of the shrouded dead. What subtle feeling told her that the time had come when she must answer to her brother for the blight put upon his life, and by her?

"You told me she was dead; you have been a living lie!"

"As God is my witness, Archibald, I thought she



was dead until it was too late,—Mercy was your promised wife.”

“Give me the proof; nothing else will satisfy me, for I know you hated her.”

“I did hate her, Archibald, but not to that extent as to be willing to blight your life to punish her.”

“And without cause; she never harmed you.”

“She laughed at me; she ridiculed me before the only man I ever loved; so, when I found it was a cousin of the same name, and not herself, who was dead, I let it pass. You were engaged to Mercy; I had to live with you, thanks to Martha Rutlege, whose flirting with Andrew Rice, and ridicule of me before him, alienated him from me. But for her, I would have had a home of my own.”

“That was about as good a turn as she could have done you,” replied Mr. Levering, his brow darkening. “A poverty-stricken, itinerant preacher, with no home in prospect; at least no settled home, with their eternal shifting from post to pillar. I think I see him now, with his saddle-bags full of tracts, and his bony old gray horse.”

“That was nothing to you, Archibald, nor to her. He suited me, and I would have suited him, had not Martha Rutlege, with her city airs and graces, cast me so in the shade, let alone her downright making fun of me before Mr. Rice.”

“Did you know that Archie’s grandmother was Martha Rutlege while Mercy lived?” asked Mr. Levering, waiving the subject of Mr. Andrew Rice.

“I have known it always, Archibald. It was no



trouble for me to keep informed of her through the Warners, whom she visited in her young days, and where you first met her."

"The Warners would rather have had me believe her dead," said Mr. Levering. "No doubt they put off telling you of the mistake as long as they could, for they never liked me."

"And whose fault was that, Archibald? You slighted them; you never noticed them any more than the sand under your feet until Martha Rutlege visited them. They knew you only made a convenience of their house; girls don't forget such things."

"And yet they must have known I was engaged to Martha Rutlege, and had promised to visit her after her return home."

"Of course they knew it," replied Hesba. "Through them I heard of her death by a railroad accident, and afterward that it was not Martha, but a cousin of the same name. Through them I heard of her marriage with Garrigue, and, after their daughter grew to womanhood, of David's attachment to her. The Rutleges were old friends of Lawyer Dubreuil, with whom David read law, and it was natural that they should be often together. I might have interfered then and revenged myself on Martha Rutlege, but I had enough of match-breaking; besides, I knew you had set your heart on having David remain single, and I thought any lot preferable to that."

"Do you suppose that Martha knows that David was my son?"

"I do not see how she could help knowing it. You



have always lived here, and have the same name that you had then. David's wife visited here after her marriage, and you were at David's funeral. How could she help knowing?"

"Do you suppose Mercy suspected?"

"Mercy had never seen Martha Rutlege; consequently, when she saw Martha Garrigue as the mother of David's wife, she was a stranger to her. She could not help hearing that you loved some one else before you married her, and perhaps heard she died; but, as she had no acquaintance with the Warners, she knew nothing further, and Mercy, you know, was by nature easy and indifferent."

Mr. Levering winced. "She was a good wife to me; poor Mercy!"

"Moreover, I knew that Mercy loved you," continued his sister, "and I was not willing she should be disappointed for the sake of one whom I considered so utterly unworthy as Martha Rutlege."

"Who told you that Mercy loved me? Not Mercy herself, I am sure."

"It does not always require words, Archibald. Our father married his miller's daughter, and when people used to quote that to Mercy, and would jokingly tell her that you would follow his example, one would be blind indeed not to see that she loved you."

Mr. Levering turned to leave the room.

"Archibald," said Hesba, "as we will probably never speak on this subject again, I want to ask you one question: Who told you that Martha Rutlege still lived?"



For answer Mr. Levering took Archie's letter from the pocket of his coat and spread it open upon the table; then unclasping his collar, he took a slender guard from his neck, to which was attached a small morocco case. He opened it, and drew forth a worn, time-stained letter, and laid it side by side with the first.

"There is the only letter I ever received from Martha Rutlege; it has never left me since I heard of her death. Compare them."

A few days after this conversation a visitor called at the elegant home of the Rev. James Ridgely, and Caroline descended to her luxurious parlor to greet her guest. It was her father in his inevitable suit of blue.

"I guess it is an old party what has been to a masquerade and somebody stole his clothes," said the grinning waiter who had admitted him, on his return to the kitchen.

"Caroline, I am going up to see Amanda and the children; will you go with me?"

"Not dressed as you are, father. If you will let me send out for a clothier to take your measure and bring you a suit of clothes, I will go with you gladly."

"You may send for one, Caroline."

"Oh, father, are you in earnest? And for a barber?"

"For a barber also, Caroline."

"And for a hatter, father?"

"For a hatter too, Caroline."

"For anything else you require, father?"

"For anything you think I require."



“Oh, father, you are the dearest man in the world!” And Caroline flew out in a maze of delight to issue her commands.

In a short time as handsome an elderly gentleman as one would wish to see called with Mrs. Caroline Ridgely at the Garrigue boarding-house. That gentleman was Archibald Levering. He spent several days with his daughter,—the first visit he had ever paid in his life,—and every evening while in the city he spent with Mrs. Garrigue. And what do you suppose Caroline gained by this attention to her father’s appearance? She gained a stepmother.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### PRUDENCE CAUGHT NAPPING.

“It happens now and then  
That women blunder in their plans  
Like very clever men.”

OF course, as there was no Mrs. Garrigue, it would be reasonable to suppose there could be no Mrs. Garrigue’s boarding-house.

Before Archibald Levering had found the betrothed of his youth, Lawyer Dubreuil had his own views in regard to the brownstone front. It had been rather crowded for some time, and Mrs. Garrigue had taken



the subject of enlarging the building under serious consideration, as she would not listen to the removal of Mr. Dubreuil and his family to another house.

This wise little man discouraged the proposed enlargement, for he thought he foresaw the time when Mrs. Garrigue would weary of that life, and he would then take the house off her hands, and give her the chance to spend the evening of her days in quiet tranquillity with him and Mrs. Amanda and the children. Fate, as usual, aided him, but took her own way of doing so. Mr. Levering stepped in with a prior claim, and, sensible little man that Lawyer Dubreuil was, he took in the situation at a glance, and gave his sincere congratulations in his usual graceful manner. Mrs. Archibald Levering was, therefore, making arrangements to leave the city for her rural abode, and the boarders were seeking other homes.

In view of the turn affairs had taken, it may be questioned if Hesba's feelings were those of unmingled joy; but that did not prevent her from having an excellent supper for the bride and groom on the evening of their journey to the old home.

Mrs. Martha Levering had all her life been a steady church-goer, therefore thought it almost impossible to exist in a neighborhood where there was no regular service in the church. Mr. Ridgely had done his best to remedy the deficiency so far by using his influence to send out supplies, and Hesba's heart was made glad in consequence. That was very good as far as it went, but Mrs. Martha wanted a regularly stationed preacher, and a parsonage for him to live in, and many were the



conferences she and Mr. Ridgely, her step-son-in-law, had in regard to it. In one of these conversations she mentioned the name of Andrew Rice; for the part she had taken in breaking off the match between Mr. Rice and Hesba had always been a painful recollection, and she told Mr. Ridgely the whole affair from beginning to end. Upon inquiring, Mr. Ridgely found that Mr. Andrew Rice was still in the Conference, but without a settled charge.

“Oh, would it not be an excellent thing if we could have him sent to Dorton?” said Mrs. Levering. “Do, James, use your influence to bring it about.”

Mr. Ridgely did use his influence, and with such good effect that before the parsonage—to the erection of which he had contributed every dollar—was completed, Mr. Andrew Rice, still a bachelor, was appointed pastor in charge of Dorton church, and made his home with Mr. and Mrs. Levering until the parsonage should be ready for occupancy; then he and Hesba, or rather, the Reverend Andrew and Mrs. Rice, took possession. Mrs. Levering and the other ladies of the congregation had made it ready, and welcomed by a pleasant entertainment their minister and his wife, who, by way of a bridal tour, had paid a visit to Caroline and Mrs. Amanda.

It was noticed that Archibald Levering upon that occasion passed among the people, conversing with this one and that one in a manner never witnessed in him by the oldest inhabitant; and the following Sunday, and every Sunday which followed, he took his seat with his wife and Archie in one of the main pews of the vil-



lage church. Sometimes they were all prevailed upon by the happy Hesba to stay the day at the parsonage, to be on hand for evening service, upon which occasion they partook of one of her excellent Sunday dinners, prepared the day before, than which Archie thought nothing could be better.

In the mean time, Timothy had taken possession of his new home, and Clem Pierson and his family were comfortably settled there, carrying on the farming in a manner to suit Farmer Brayson and Mrs. Carleton, and through them, Timothy,—who attended Dorton Academy, thus continuing the education for which Mr. Bryor had laid such a substantial foundation.

All through Timothy's boyhood there had been a secret wish to know something of his parentage. He had always borne the name of Edmonds, but he never believed that to be his real name. A feeling, like the fading remembrance of a dream, haunted him that he had known another life and other associations than those of Hammer's Alley. Once he had startled granny by asking for information on this particular subject; but although she seemed on the point of telling him, she never did, but smoked away vigorously until something occurred to her whereby to change the current of the boy's thoughts. Now that he had a position to maintain in the neighborhood he became more anxious than ever to know something of his parents, and resolved to take advantage of the very next holiday and pay a visit to the "Home" and have a conversation with granny, for the purpose of finding out, if he could, who and what he was.



The lovely face of Isabel Bryor was another motive which impelled him to this step. From the first time of seeing her he had loved her; but his knowledge of Mark Bryor taught him that no one of that name would condescend to recognize one who could boast of no lineage.

Isabel's first visit to the neighborhood had been to her uncle Mark Bryor's funeral. At the time Colonel Willoughby died, her father and mother had been invited to "*Ogilvie's Pride*," and Mrs. Richard Bryor's haughty spirit had been wounded that Colonel Willoughby should have left his only child in charge of Aunt Ursula and Madame Angela, whom she looked upon as utter strangers to them and theirs, instead of herself, his own cousin. Henceforth she never interested herself in regard to the orphan, and up to the time of her death had no communication whatever with "*Ogilvie's Pride*."

Aunt Ursula, with her clear-sighted thoughtfulness, saw how much the two young cousins, Mary Willoughby and Isabel Bryor,—both growing into lovely womanhood,—could be benefited by an intimacy, so at the time of Mark Bryor's death Madame Angela and Mary called upon Isabel and her father, and while there, offered the use of their family carriage, horses, and coachman to take them to the burial-ground at Dorton. This offer, tendered so delicately and kindly, was appreciated and accepted, as was also the invitation to return in the carriage to "*Ogilvie's Pride*" and remain as long as agreeable to them.

In return, Mary Willoughby was invited to visit



Isabel in her city home, and after that it grew to be the understanding that Mary should spend her winters in the city, while Isabel every summer enjoyed the pleasures of a lovely country home at "Ogilvie's Pride."

Sometimes, when Timothy was trudging home from the Dorton Academy, his books under his arm, or of serene moonlit nights was returning from a walk to Mrs. Carleton's, he met a merry company of four, and among them was one he worshipped, but, alas! from afar. Though Isabel always recognized him by a slight smile and faint blush, his soul at times grew desponding, and he doubted that the distance between them would ever be lessened.

Sometimes the party were on horseback, the two girls appearing more lovely than ever in their waving plumes and close-fitting habits of dark-blue cloth; Rufus Carleton, the devoted cavalier of Mary Wilmoughby, while at the side of Isabel rode with boyish nonchalance, Frank Carleton.

Timothy looked upon the successful wooing of Rufus with heartfelt rejoicing; but, noble of soul as he was, he envied, while he wondered, that Frank seemed to hold the bliss of being in the society of Isabel so lightly, a bliss for which he would have given every earthly possession.

To Mrs. Prudence Pierson, one of the disadvantages of the little house at Dorton had been that there was not enough of house-room to keep clean and closed from every-day use. Clement would have enjoyed his home had there been enough to enjoy, but the small



parlor had always been held by Prudence sacred from family use; after a few months of housekeeping the sitting-room followed suit, and swept and garnished, with bowed shutters and locked door, it was left to enjoy its sepulchral repose.

The kitchen, though kept a miracle of neatness considering that it was sitting-room, dining-room, sewing-room, nursery, and kitchen, could scarcely be called a haven of rest to Clem. He seldom took a seat in it that it did not happen to be against the door which led to the closet, stairs, pantry, or cellar, from which he was requested (sharply or gently, according to the mood of the moment or the exigencies of the occasion) to move by his busy spouse, who had vainly applied to the owner to build an outside kitchen, so that the one then in use might be cleaned, closed, and darkened.

Grandmother Atheling, in whose gentle breast could linger no shadow of resentment for the unkindness formerly shown her by Prudence, vainly tried to exorcise this housekeeping demon. She besought her to use her house, and keep it lighted and comfortable for herself and family, whose home it was, and not locked up in readiness for a chance visitor. But it was of no use: Prudence would have her own way.

Timothy's offer of the farm to be cultivated on shares opened a delightful prospect for Prudence. She was tired of village life, and, when the time came, left Dorton without one regret. Prudence had some excellent qualities, but she was a rigid disciplinarian, almost too rigid for comfort, and before she and Clem had



lived together three years she had succeeded in breaking him of several habits which she averred he had been allowed to acquire through the carelessness of his mother.

By the time they moved to Timothy's farm, Clem had learned to wipe his shoes on the mat at the door and step over the well-scoured sills, to hang up hat and coat, put his paper or book away as soon as he was done with it, and had stopped smoking and chewing tobacco. But with it all Clem was thoughtless and forgetful, and would not rise in the morning as early as his energetic wife considered necessary for the successful carrying on of farm-work,—two faults of which she was impatiently conscious that he did not try to renounce. Three times within her recollection, friends had sent word by Clem that they were coming to take tea with her,—messages which he forgot to deliver until he came home to supper and found them there; and the number of commissions to the village which he had forgotten since they moved on the farm was legion.

"It is all carelessness," she was accustomed to say after another trial of this kind. "No one need tell me it is owing to a naturally defective memory. I do not suppose my memory is better than that of other people, but I make it a point not to forget anything, and therefore I never forget anything."

"Well, I know you are a little uncommon in that respect," Clem would reply, meekly; "but I think you ought to have a little patience with folks who cannot always have their wits about them."



“Not a bit! With a person who is always forgetting something and a sleepy-head I have not a shadow of sympathy. No matter what time in the night a person would speak to me, I should be awake in a moment and have my senses about me, and who ever heard of my oversleeping my time in the morning since I have had charge of a house?”

One morning a short time after this conjugal dialogue, in which, as usual, Prudence had the closing argument, she awoke from a good night's rest with the instant consciousness that she had a full day's work before her. Ever since her removal from Dorton to Timothy's farm she had been possessed of a treasure in the shape of a maid-of-all-work who took pride in doing all that was to be done in the kitchen, leaving Mrs. Pierson to attend to the other parts of the house, the baby, the poultry, and innumerable other duties which farm life imposes. But this treasure had departed the Monday before upon a visit of a week's duration, and Clement—whose parents had moved to a distant city—took advantage of the leisure the season afforded to pay them a few days' visit, engaging Harry Brayson to come over and attend to the stock in his absence, and Timothy had gone to the city to spend his Easter holiday and have during his visit some talks with granny.

Therefore, Prudence was enjoying the novel experience of having a farm and dwelling all to herself and baby, and the small girl she had obtained from the village to bear her company and give assistance about the house when needed.



She dressed herself speedily and neatly, and before descending gave a call to her youthful assistant.

"Come, Betty," she said, briskly, "be right smart and help me all you can this morning. Your mother sent me word that the children are to meet, for an hour or so, to decorate the village school-house for the exhibition this evening, so you must help me all you can before ten o'clock, the hour they are to meet."

"I shall be very busy to-day," thought she, as she went down-stairs. "Saturday is always a busier day than any other, and I must be done in time to rest and dress for the exhibition."

The eight-day clock in the hall below broke in upon her reflections with its solemn, measured strokes, and Prudence paused to count. Instead of stopping, as she supposed it would, at the seventh stroke, it kept remorselessly on, until nine distinct beats were vibrating on the quiet air.

"What in the world can be the matter with the clock?" she thought. "It surely cannot be that time of day."

She hurried to convince herself that the ancient timepiece was deviating from the example of George Washington; but, alas! face and hands corroborated speech, and Prudence was compelled to sit down on one of the hall-chairs to take in this new aspect of affairs.

"I was very busy all day yesterday, and it was late when I went to sleep," she communed; "but I have never overslept my time since I have had charge of a house. How thankful I am that Clement is not at



home to know it! I expected to have the bread made up and so much done by this time, and there is the baby waking. Well, I never!"

Betty hurried down, pleased with the prospect of a visit to the woods, and with her she brought the baby, who, unlike his mamma, had awakened at the usual time. Prudence stirred some flour into the foaming sponge, which should have been made into dough two hours before, and which showed its observance of the neglect by running over the pan in sundry places, and then sat down to bathe and dress baby, while Betty started the fire. She was sorely tempted, under the pressure of circumstances, to keep Betty at home; but, reflecting that her stay at the school-house would not be long, concluded to make the best of it and let her go.

"We will not cook much this morning, Betty," she said; "it is time now you were getting ready to go. We will just boil some eggs and make coffee. Be sure and come back as soon as you can, so we can be done in good time for this evening."

Betty flew around in fine spirits, and soon a comfortable breakfast was on the table; after which Betty dressed and set out for the village. Prudence had only got the table out of the way, the baby on a rug in the middle of the floor, with playthings around him, and her attention turned to the bread, when Betty returned almost out of breath.

"The school-house is shut up, and there is not a soul about," she said, with a quiver in her voice.

Prudence tried to hide the feeling of satisfaction



which would come in spite of her, so she said, consolingly, "Well, never mind, Betty; they have changed the hour, I suppose, and forgot to send us word. I am going to the village this evening to take some butter and eggs, and you shall put baby in his carriage and go with me and select a new dress for yourself."

The late hour at which Prudence had arisen made everything hurried, and three o'clock found her in the midst of her preparations for the morrow; but still she had reached the turn of affairs from whence she could see the end, so was not more burdened in mind than was habitual with her. The nicely baked loaves of bread were cooling upon the table, their glossy brown coats contrasting with the flaky whiteness of the pies; a pair of chickens for the next day's dinner were simmering in the oven, in the intervals of watching which Prudence was doing the week's mending and jogging the cradle occasionally with her foot.

A rap on the door summoned Betty from the ironing of a few towels, when the village physician, good old Dr. Linthicum, entered, in compliance with a message sent to him the day before by Prudence, who thought baby's gums needed attention.

"I called this afternoon on my way to the meeting at Dorton," he remarked, as he arose to go, after a short call. "I was thinking that perhaps Clement would like to ride along with me; if so, I would be glad of his company."

Now, both Mr. Pierson and Dr. Linthicum were eager politicians, and Prudence took it for granted that it was a political meeting,—something in which



she took but little interest ; but she answered politely, "Thank you, doctor ; I know he would be very glad to go with you, but he is away from home, and will not be back before Monday evening. How is Mrs. Peters, doctor ?"

"She is a very sick woman ; a very sick woman indeed. She may possibly live through the night, but I doubt it."

"Poor woman !" sighed Prudence, as she laid aside her last piece of mending and took her knitting from the work-basket. "I always intended going over to see her, but have so much to do."

"You are certainly an industrious woman, Mrs. Pierson," he replied, a little dryly, as he glanced around the room.

"Well, I always have plenty to do, doctor, but this week more than usual, for Maggie is away."

"Oh, that accounts for it, does it? Well, do not forget that there are more days than one."

"I shall not work too hard, doctor ; I have nearly finished. The only really difficult thing I did to-day was the churning, but it was completed satisfactorily."

All was done by five o'clock, and Prudence and Betty, their eggs and butter in a basket and baby in his carriage, set out for the village. Unfortunately for their expedition, the store doors were not only locked, but the shutters were closed and barred ; and even the empty dry-goods boxes on the porch, which formed such an attractive lounging-place for the gossiping masculines of the neighborhood, particularly on Saturday evening, were depopulated and forlorn.



"Poor Mrs. Peters must be dead," said Mrs. Pierson to Betty, "the doctor said she could scarcely last until morning. Oh, well, we will come some time again."

The evening proved rainy, and Prudence concluded that the exhibition would be postponed; so after tea she read an hour or so, and then retired to her needed rest.

The next morning was fair and beautiful, and Prudence, who had promised her aunt Hesba to spend the day with her and attend both services, felt very much like church-going indeed. She arose late, as was her Sunday morning custom, and after breakfast was over, and the little odds and ends of work—which even such a strict observer of the Sabbath as was Prudence considered necessary—were completed, she dressed baby, who had never as yet been favored with the opportunity of seeing how loud he could cry in church, put him in his carriage, locked the house and departed.

Prudence knew she was early, but she was a little surprised not to see any carriages in the yard which surrounded the church. However, as she intended calling to see Mrs. Rice first, she was rather glad she was earlier than she expected. There was no response to her knocking at Mr. Rice's door, so returning to the church, where she supposed her aunt had gone, she entered, but to her surprise found no worshippers. She was convinced that she must be very early, when she came upon the sexton, who, with a long-handled brush, was so busy trying to bring down a refractory cobweb, which was dangling from the ceiling over the pulpit, that he did not hear her footsteps in the aisle. He had



his back toward her, and Prudence did not wish him to feel mortified at being caught at his secular work, so she picked up her hymn-book and began piously to read a hymn, inwardly amused at the antics of the sexton, who to save time, she supposed, was hopping and jumping to reach the ceiling, instead of stopping long enough to get something to stand upon. Finally the cobweb succumbed, and the sexton, apparently satisfied, passed Prudence on his way to the vestibule, to deposit his wicked, Sabbath-breaking broom, and, as he did so, he gave her what she considered the superfluous information, "That the rest had not come yet, and Mrs. Rice had gone to Peters's store for needles and thread."

"Gone for needles and thread!" thought Prudence, gazing in mute amazement at the retreating form of the sexton. "Aunt Hesba, the minister's wife, gone for needles and thread! Would wonders never cease?"

The hymn she had been reading gave her memory the slip, and in its place came the refrain, "Needles and thread! needles and thread! Well, I never!"

She had scarcely recovered from this second shock to her sense of Sabbath decorum, when good Mrs. Linthicum hurried in, and said, in a hearty, jovial voice, "Now this is real good in you, dear Mrs. Pierson; we thought of sending you word we were coming,—as you were not present to hear it given out,—but heard you had no help."

Mrs. Prudence was bewildered and dumfounded, and sat looking gravely at Mrs. Linthicum.

"Did you bring a lunch, my dear?" said that lady. "We expect to be here the best part of the day, and I



have ordered Silas to bring us a pot of good hot tea at one o'clock. There will be plenty of everything for you, if you neglected to provide anything."

"Mrs. Linthicum, what do you mean?" at length broke forth Prudence. "What use can you have for needles and thread and lunch at church?"

"Why, to make the new carpet, to be sure; have you not heard that Aunt Ursula presented the church with a carpet?"

"Not one word; and on Sunday, too!"

It was now Mrs. Linthicum's turn to be astonished, and she emulated Mrs. Prudence in the genuineness of her surprise.

"If this is Sunday, what day was yesterday?" she said.

"Why, Saturday, to be sure," replied Prudence, confidently.

"The pastor of this church and his congregation did not think so, at all events," remarked the doctor's wife. "My dear woman, you have lost a day out of your week."

At that moment Mrs. Rice and several other ladies came in. "I looked for you all day yesterday, Prudence; what prevented you from coming?" said Aunt Hesba, a little dryly.

Prudence reddened, but made no reply. "I cannot stay here to-day, that is certain," thought she to herself; "I should feel all the time as though I were sewing on Sunday."

Good Mrs. Linthicum, to whom she whispered her intentions, readily excused her, promising to explain all to her aunt Hesba when opportunity afforded.



Prudence had left the house locked she was sure, but she was equally sure she saw smoke issuing from the chimney, and heard the pump-handle going as she neared home, and she was right. As it was Monday, and Maggie's visit was out, like a sensible girl she had come home, found the key where they were accustomed to hide it,—in the notch of the old plum-tree in the yard,—and was busy getting dinner.

The evening brought Mr. Clem Pierson, who, like most persons not accustomed to spend much time from home, imagined a great deal indeed must have transpired in his absence, and took the best plan there was to find out.

"Did you go to the exhibition?" he inquired pleasantly of his wife.

"No; you know it rained last evening," Prudence replied.

"But the exhibition was on Saturday evening; it did not rain then."

"To be sure, so it was," she replied, absently.

"Have you heard from Mrs. Peters?" said he, glancing rather curiously at his wife, who appeared to be buried in thought.

"I guess she must be dead; the store was closed on Saturday,—no, yesterday. Oh, I don't know anything about it," she said, rather sharply.

"Did you have baby's gums attended to?" said this interrogation-point of a husband, after a pause.

"Yes; Dr. Linthicum called on his way to a political meeting. He would have taken you along if you had been here."



"A political meeting this time of year?" inquired Clem. "Did he mention who was to be the speaker?"

"No, it could not have been a political meeting, either," responded she, slowly. "It was yesterday, and it would not be a meeting of that kind on Sunday."

"No, I should suppose not," returned Clem, dryly. "I will walk over and see Linthicum, and perhaps I can find out something about it."

Prudence had started to retire to rest, when she heard her husband return, and while passing along the upper hall she heard something like a suppressed chuckle in the dining-room below; she heard a chuckle as slippers were being substituted for boots; she heard a chuckle as Clem ascended the stairs; and although his face was as grave as that of a Comanche Indian when she surreptitiously glanced at it, she needed nothing to convince her that he had heard something more from jolly Dr. and Mrs. Linthicum than the name of the speaker at what she had taken for granted was a political meeting.

But the best of it was Clem Pierson never afterward heard his wife say, "I have not a particle of patience with a sleepy-head or one who forgets what he ought to remember."



## CHAPTER XX.

## FRUITION.

“Life hath its hopes fulfilled ;  
Its glad fruitions, its blest answered prayer,  
Sweeter for waiting long, whose holy air  
Indrawn to silent souls, breathes forth its rare,  
Grand speech, by joy distilled.”

ONE lovely spring morning Lawyer Dubreuil obtained the handsomest turnout to be had for hire in Baltimore, and took his family out to spend the day with his mother-in-law at Levering's Mill.

The carriage was stowed full of children, even to the exclusion of the little lawyer himself, who sat on the box with the driver, while Mrs. Amanda held alternately two children upon her lap, the one whose turn it was, standing by the lowered glass door of the carriage, gazing with delight at the varying scenery, so new and enchanting.

Several of the children had been borrowed for the occasion ; for whenever Lawyer Dubreuil had an enjoyment he wanted all who could, to have a share, and his neighbors on either side were more than pleased to lend their little ones for a trip to the country.

Archibald and Mrs. Levering were in readiness for them. Archie took the children in charge, and a fine day they had of it, as indeed everybody had who visited Levering's Mill.



In the afternoon a neighbor called to see Mrs. Levering, and in the lady Lawyer Dubreuil was delighted to find an acquaintance of his youthful school-teaching days at Dorton. That lady was Mrs. Carleton, and Lawyer Dubreuil and herself, joined by Mr. and Mrs. Levering, recalled many of the frolics of their youth, to which Mrs. Amanda was an amused listener.

"Do take your bonnet off and stay the afternoon," said Mrs. Levering, hospitably. "I am sure there is nothing to call you home."

"Nothing at all," replied Mrs. Carleton, hesitatingly, "except that Timothy was to come out from the city to-day, and on his way from Dorton was to call at our place to let me know the result of a small business matter with which I intrusted him."

"Timothy! what Timothy?" said Lawyer Dubreuil, with his ever-alert eye to business.

"Well, I really do not know exactly," replied Mrs. Carleton, smiling. "He goes by the name of Edmonds."

"Bless my soul, madame!" said the little lawyer, excitedly; "was ever the like of that known before? Here I have been inquiring for that boy and advertising for him in every prominent city in the Union for the last three weeks, and find him here under my very nose. Well, well; it has been a maxim of my life that truth is stranger than fiction."

"Are you aware, Mr. Dubreuil, that you are speaking in riddles?" said Mrs. Carleton, a little impatiently.

"What about Timothy? Who is he?"

"He is the son of Mark Bryor,—your old neighbor,



Mark Bryor, my dear madame,—and his mother was a wealthy Liverpool merchant's daughter, and what is better for Timothy, she was Mark Bryor's lawful wife."

"His wife?" echoed Mrs. Carleton, while Mr. Levering listened with aroused interest. "Why, everybody about here thought he was a bachelor."

"No doubt he wished many a time he had never been anything else," replied Mr. Dubreuil; "for he and his wife lived very unhappily the one year they were together. The marrying of the petted child with mind undeveloped and character unformed, was but an impulse with Mark Bryor; he never really loved her. When Mark went off alone to Italy, her father, who had never allowed her to leave his house, forbade all communication with him, and when the poor girl-wife died, he packed the child, then three years old, and his nurse off to America, and sent word to Mark Bryor that mother and son were both dead. He had promised the nurse Edmonds to send money regularly for the maintenance of the boy, but never did, and how they subsisted until Timothy found a home with you the Master above only knows."

"But how did you find all this out?" said Mrs. Carleton, eagerly; "tell us that."

"I am coming to that, my dear madame,—coming to that all in good time. It has been a maxim of my life that the more haste the less speed, so we'll allow the story to develop itself. The vessel in which Timothy and Nurse Edmonds sailed was bound for Baltimore; and when that old sinner of a Liverpool merchant found himself about to leave the world and his money



behind him, he repented of his misdeeds and tried to hunt up Mark Bryor in Italy. Failing in that, he instructed his attorney to communicate immediately with some lawyer in our city to try, if possible, to hunt up the boy. The attorney happened to pick on me with whom to open communication, with the promise that I should have half the profits set aside in the old merchant's will for that purpose, should the boy be found. If this is the boy we are searching for, and I have no doubt in the world that it is, he will be the richest man south of Mason and Dixon's line, or my name is not Lauren Dubreuil, attorney-at-law."

A rap on the hall-door interrupted the conversation, and Timothy was announced. He had stopped at Mrs. Carleton's, and, finding that she had gone to call upon Mrs. Levering, concluded to take Levering's Mill in his route and inform her of the result of his commission. The rather care-worn expression with which he left home had disappeared. Timothy carried near his heart an antidote for most of the ills which life could hold for him. The light of happiness beamed in his clear blue eyes; his manner was possessed, easy, and graceful, and, as usual, courteous and respectful.

Timothy had seen Granny Edmonds, and had heard good news. Being of age, granny considered that Timothy had a right to know all she had to tell, and that was much. She had taken the precaution several times, since leaving Liverpool, to go to different magistrates and make solemn affidavit, that, what different lawyers had recorded as it fell from her lips was true. These papers were left with the lawyers, and to them



Timothy applied, and the records were now in his possession.

A short time after, Timothy and Lawyer Dubreuil set sail for Liverpool. There they found everything as represented, and Timothy came into his grandfather's estate without trouble or delay. But his heart was in America, and he resolved that his home should be among his neighbors and his friends, so back to America he came.

Five years passed away,—years which brought changes, some slight, some great, to those he had known and loved from boyhood. Archibald Levering and his family were prosperous, Archibald himself looking younger than when Timothy had first known him. A comfortable new carriage had been bought by him, and the body of the old one was converted by his skillful hands into a handsome sleigh, which Archie painted in fine style. With gay and handsome sleigh-robcs and afghan, knit by his sweetheart's own fair hands, he and Annette Wheeler glided cheerily "over the hills and far away" to the merry tinkling of the bells, and the grandson of Martha Rutlege bade fair to be the third Archibald Levering who married the miller's daughter.

The Reverend Andrew and Mrs. Rice were growing steadily into the respect and affection of his people, the number of which had more than trebled since he had taken Dorton church in charge. Though married late in life, years were doing their work toward assimilating dispositions entirely opposite, and both were benefited by the discipline. The strong will



and warm temper of Aunt Hesba were subdued and held in restraint by the consistent example of her husband, while his amiability was not suffered to degenerate into insignificance by his energetic, self-reliant wife, who possessed originality unknown to his gentler nature.

Mr. Ridgely and his family were prospering, as he deserved that they should prosper, Caroline looking out for number one, as she had done all her life. She was praised and petted by her husband's parishioners, who were proud of her beauty and elegance, while her affection for her friends had about the vivifying warmth of an electric light on snow.

At Mrs. Carleton's there had been a change,—

“Why weep ye, then, for him, who, having won  
The bound of man's appointed years at last,  
Life's blessings all enjoyed, life's labor done,  
Serenely to his final rest has passed;  
While the soft memory of his virtues yet  
Lingers like twilight hues when the bright sun is set?”

At “Ogilvie's Pride” there had been great changes. Mary Willoughby had attained her majority, had married happily,—for her husband was Rufus Carleton,—and two lovely children, living images of the curly-haired darling who had slept in Madame Angela's arms on that long sea-voyage so many years ago, were “wellsprings of pleasure” at “Ogilvie's Pride.”

Old age had stolen almost imperceptibly upon Aunt Ursula; it had whitened her once raven-black hair and dimmed the lustre of her starry eyes. The violin had refused to respond to her stiffened fingers and



feeble will, and when one day she calmly took leave of those who had made life so sweet to her, more bitter tears were never shed over the grave of hope and promise, than those she had left behind shed over that of decrepit age.

A year had passed away, and Madame Angela said nothing in regard to a tombstone to mark the resting-place of Aunt Ursula; and when Rufus and Mary gently suggested it, they in after-years comprehended her reply: "All in good time, my children; we will keep it sweet and bright with the flowers she loved, and when I am laid beside her, you will follow implicitly, I know, the directions I shall leave in regard to our tombstone."

"Can you doubt it, dear Madame Angela?" said they, tenderly, and the subject was never mentioned again.

A few years after, when Madame Angela departed in peace, they remembered her instructions, and among her papers found all they desired to know.

One sweet summer morning the children of Dorton school spelled aloud this inscription on the tombstone over the two graves known to be those of Aunt Ursula and Madame Angela:

"Sacred to the memory of Count Victor Emanuel Paul Frederick De Villiars, who, for political reasons, was forced to leave his native land. He loved his adopted country, and his prayers were for her prosperity. With calm submission to the will of God, he departed this life June 6th, 18—, aged 81 years.

"This stone is also sacred to the memory of Lady Marie Josephine Angela De Villiars, his wife, who departed this life September 7th, 18—, aged 70 years."



Changes had taken place on the farm of Timothy Bryor. A substantial and roomy farm-house was built for the occupancy of Clem Pierson and his family, to the great delight of Prudence, who at last had plenty of rooms to keep clean, closed, and darkened; while from an old-fashioned farm-house, the dwelling once occupied by Mark Bryor was converted into an elegant villa, fitted up with every convenience, luxury, and embellishment that wealth without ostentation could desire. Wings were built on either side, with apartments in each suited to the requirements of a very small family, but furnished with every comfort and luxury. Each wing, in fact, was a home; sufficiently near the main building for society and protection, yet a separate and distinct home. A fine-toned piano was in one of these homes, in accordance with a promise of long standing made by Timothy. That wing was the residence of Cousin Melie; the other, of Granny Edmonds.

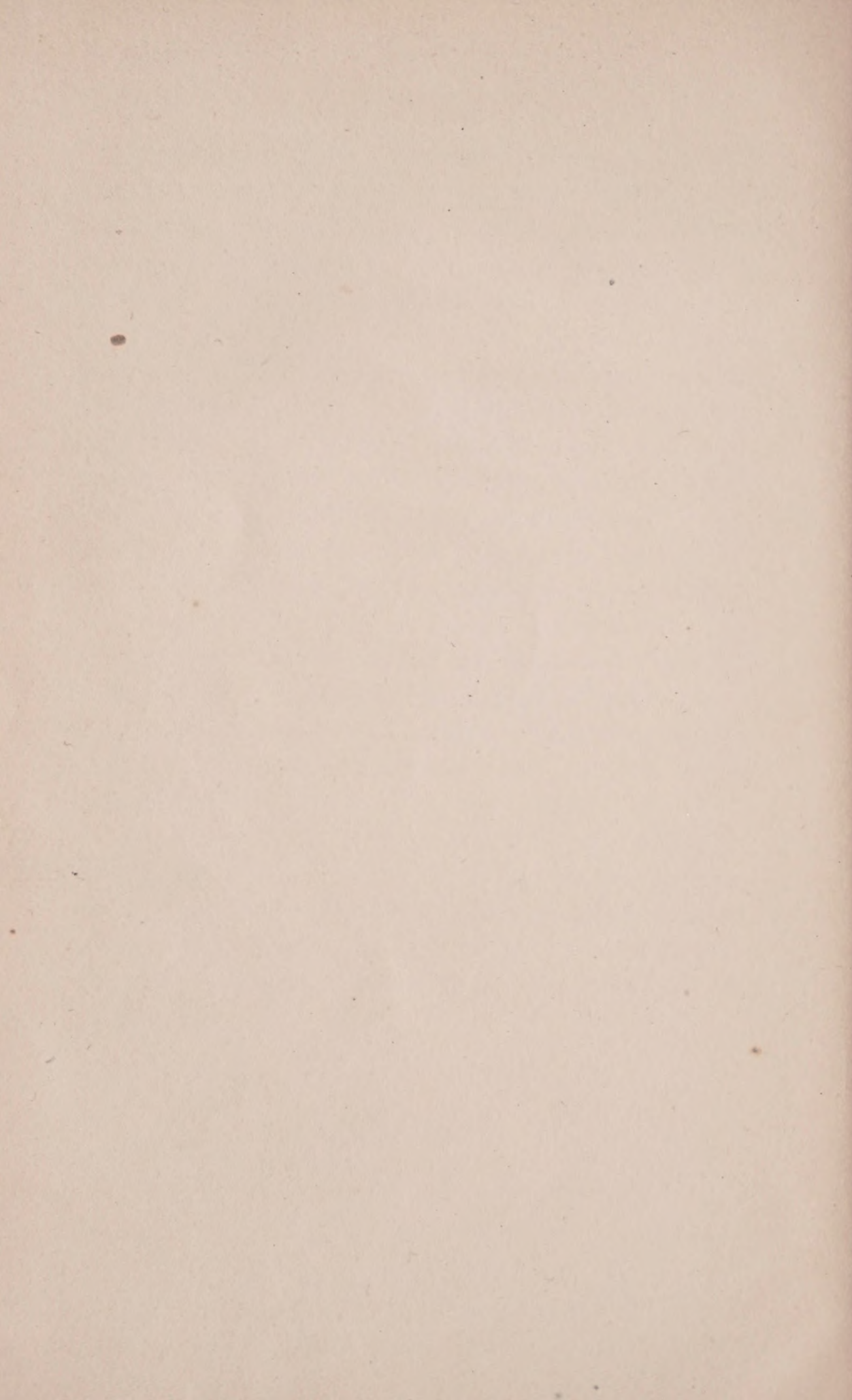
Children with the auburn hair of Timothy and the sweet, sunny countenance of Isabel made the once silent house ring with merry shouts; while behind the crimson brocade curtain stood, as when placed there by the repentant hand of Mark Bryor, the graceful statue of Grace Darling.

THE END.









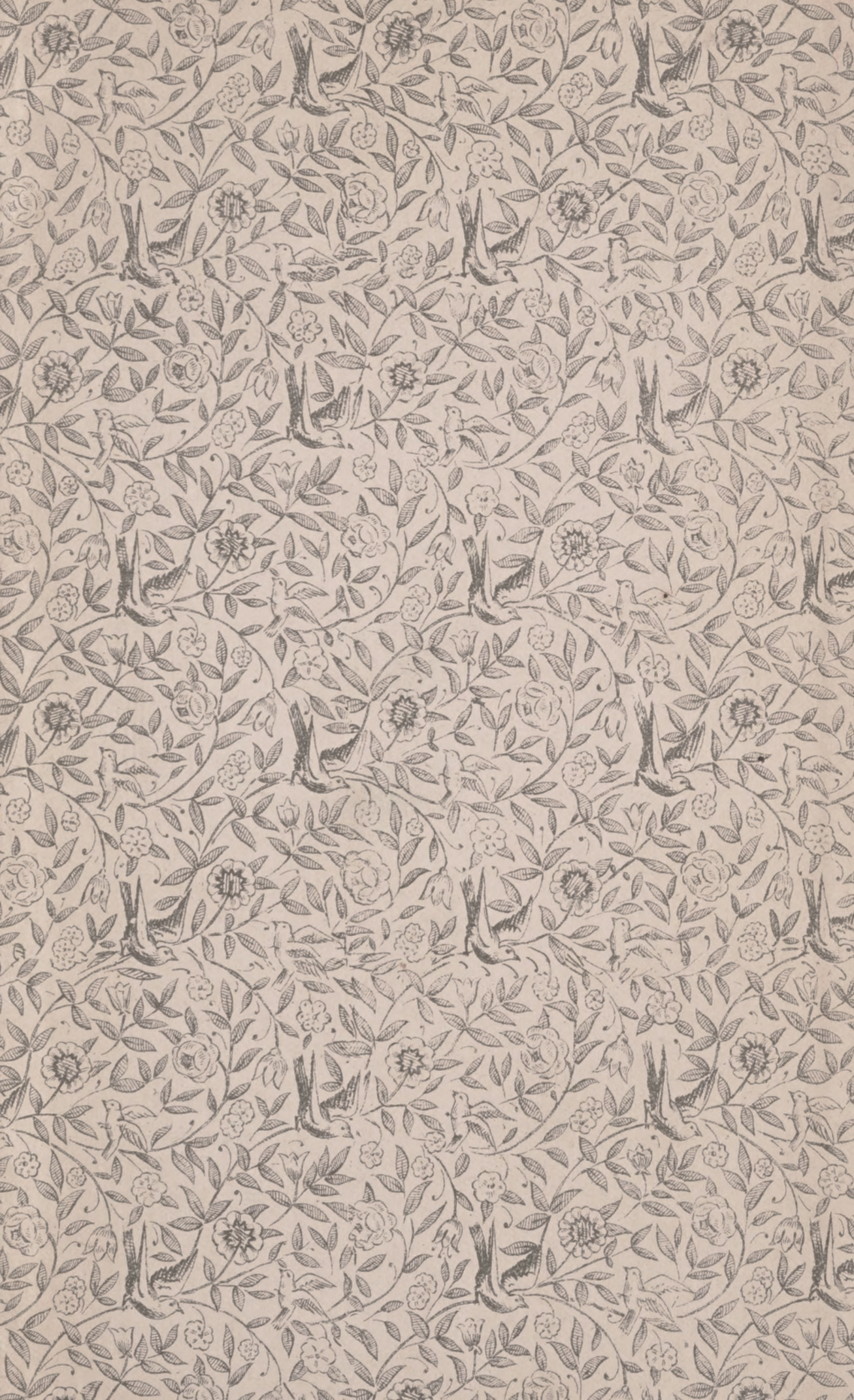














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